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THE
JOURNAL OF DUNCAN M'GILLIVRAY

“The Journal of Duncan M’Gillivray of the North West Company” is prepared, with an Introduction, Notes and Appendix, by Arthur S. Morton, Professor of History, University of Saskatchewan. It is published by The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited.

It is issued in this edition only, which is strictly limited to three hundred and fifty numbered copies, of which Nos. 11 to 350 inclusive are for sale.

The work is printed on Byronic Book paper manufactured by The Howard Smith Paper Mills, Limited, Montreal.

The printing and binding of the volume have been done by The Hunter-Rose Company, Limited, Toronto.

This volume is No.....54.....

THE JOURNAL OF DUNCAN M'GILLIVRAY

OF THE NORTH WEST COMPANY

at Fort George on the
Saskatchewan, 1794-5

With Introduction, Notes and Appendix by

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TORONTO: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY OF
CANADA LIMITED, AT ST. MARTIN'S HOUSE
MXMXXIX

OCT 15 1929
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Printed and Bound in Canada
THE HUNTER-ROSE CO., LIMITED, TORONTO

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PREFACE

The manuscript of Mr. Duncan M'Gillivray's Journal is in the Library of the Royal Colonial Institute, London, England. A photostat copy is in the Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

We are told by Duncan M'Gillivray himself that as clerk he was given the duty of keeping the usual business journal of the post to which he was attached. Unlike many of his fellows in the fur trade, M'Gillivray desired to put some of the colour and interest of the life around him into his pages and to keep a copy for his friends. That was easy enough so long as he was on the voyage to his "wintering ground", but when the trading at the post began and scores and even hundreds of Indians came to the Fort, the details of business which had to be entered threatened to blur the picture of the scenes which he would fain sketch. Accordingly, he broke away from the business journal and, so to say, snatched up his brush to give his friends something of the pomp and ceremonial of the life and, we may add, some sense of the exhilaration and the grossness of society at a Fort on the River Saskatchewan in the years of grace 1794 and 1795.

"I shall hereafter extract for your information the most material circumstances out of the Fort Journal, which I am appointed to write, for it would be an endless undertaking to mention distinctly every occurrence that happens in a place of such extensive trade as this, surrounded by numerous tribes of Indians, some of whom are continually at the Fort."

While the historian regrets the loss of the details of the trade of the Fort as entered by such a skilful hand, he

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may console himself with the knowledge that he gets the scenes of a winter at Fort George, many and varied, grave and gay, now in the brightest colour, now in the darkest shades—all of it making an unforgettable picture of the life and business of a fur-trader on the River Saskatchewan.

The M'Gillivrays were three in number in this generation. William was the eldest, and after him came in succession Duncan and Simon, the last associated with the union of the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821. They were the nephews of Simon McTavish,¹ a principal partner of the firm of McTavish, Frobisher & Co., which was agent of the North West Company from the beginning (1784) and which sent Mr. McTavish from year to year up to Grand Portage with the goods from Montreal for the Indian trade. Mr. McTavish it was who placed the ladder of promotion in the "concern", as it was called, in position for these young men to climb. William entered the great fur-trading company as a clerk. He was in the Red River Department in 1785-6 as Roderick Mackenzie tells us in his *Reminiscences*. At that time all the fur-traders of the North West had not yet been drawn into the North West Company. Peter Pangman, as we shall see, was in opposition, and had the support of Gregory, McLeod & Co., the firm which brought Alexander Mackenzie, the great explorer, and his cousin, Roderick Mackenzie, into the trade. In the winter of 1786-7, the last winter of the rivalry of the two "concerns", William M'Gillivray and Roderick Mackenzie had their opposing posts "within a gun shot of one another", on Lac des Serpents, near and

¹ "The two gentlemen [Simon and William] are sons of a small tenant of the Lovat Estate in Inverness Shire and were educated at the expense of their Uncle, Mr. Simon McTavish"—*Selkirk Papers, Canadian Archives*, vol. 35, p. 10091-2.

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below Isle-à-la-Crosse, on the Churchill River, the English River as it was then called. In 1789 the two were working amicably together in the united "concern"—Roderick Mackenzie in Athabasca and William M'Gillivray in the English River Department. In 1790 M'Gillivray became a "wintering partner", that is, he passed from being a salaried clerk to have a share in the Company and to be in control of a Department in the Interior. To this end he had bought Mr. Peter Pond's share for £800. In 1793-4 the brother, Duncan, was at Pine Island Fort, on the Northern Saskatchewan, the lower post in the Department of the Upper Forts des Prairies. He then went to the principal post, Fort George, up river about fifty miles west of the Saskatchewan-Alberta boundary of to-day.¹ It was as clerk at this post that he wrote his *Journal* for the trading year 1794-5. The elder of the two brothers was taken into Mr. McTavish's firm, and as an agent travelled to and from Montreal and Grand Portage with the goods "for the interior". David Thompson, fur-trader and explorer, met him in 1797 at Grand Portage when he himself left the Hudson's Bay Company and entered the North West "concern".

"The Agents who acted for the Company and were also Partners of the Firm [McTavish, Frobisher & Co.] were the Honourable William McGillivray and Sir Alexander McKenzie, gentlemen of enlarged views."—Thompson's *Narrative*, p. 169-170.²

At the death of Mr. McTavish in 1804, M'Gillivray became one of the principal partners in the firm, and in the agreement of that year uniting the X. Y. Company and the North West Company, he signed for the latter

¹ In latitude 53° 52' 7" N.—on the north bank of the river, in N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ sect. 24, tp. 56, range 6, west of 4th meridian.

² Ed. by J. B. Tyrrell for the Champlain Soc., Tor., 1916.

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party second, next after Mr. John Gregory. For many years he was indefatigable in his journeyings between Montreal and the "rendez-vous" on Lake Superior, and when the route was changed and Grand Portage deserted for the Kaministiquia River, the "new Fort" was given his name as Fort William, which name the city on its site bears to-day.

William M'Gillivray stands out henceforth as the chief influence in the North West Company and in fur-trading circles in Montreal. More especially is this seen in the long and bitter struggle with the Hudson's Bay Company under the directorate of Lord Selkirk. He was made a member of the Legislative Council of Lower Canada in 1814. From 1818 he spent much of his time in England and played his part in uniting the two companies in 1821. In 1825 he took his family, his carriages and his plate over to the old country to live the life of a landed gentleman. He died on October 16, 1825.

On the second page of the Manuscript of the *Journal of the late Duncan M'Gillivray Esquire* it is written in the hand of the elder and now surviving brother :

For John Henry, Esqr.

from his Friend

Wm. M'Gillivray.

John Henry is known to American history by the episode of the "Henry Letters". A plausible Irishman, he came to the United States, where he served, as he claimed, in the American army as Captain. He married a French lady, apparently in Philadelphia. He seems to have been early left a widower and to have drifted by way of Vermont to Montreal. Here he was in an attorney's office and made himself of service to the fur-trading magnates of the

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city by defending their interests in articles in a local newspaper. The traders decided that he was just the sort of man to serve them on the Bench, and began operations to that end on his behalf. Although John Henry knew French and understood the French people, he could not well be appointed a judge of the Bench of Lower Canada, which administered French Law, without something of a course of study, at least so he says, and to this he objected. However, when one of the judges of Upper Canada, Robert Thorpe, was retired, the opportunity came. John Henry himself wrote to Edward Ellice in London, and Edward to his brother William; Messrs Todd & McGill of Montreal wrote to Mr. Brickwood; Joseph Frobisher wrote to Mr. Coffin; and William McGillivray to his brother, Simon; while John Richardson wrote to an unnamed person described as "his friend". As the result of all this effort an array of London firms—Inglis, Ellice & Co., MacTavish, Fraser & Co., Brickwood, Daniell & Co.,—sent a joint letter enclosing all the Canadian letters to Lord Castlereagh, Secretary of State, and asking for the appointment of Mr. John Henry, of Montreal, as Puisne Judge in Upper Canada.

"The reasons which led to the removal of Mr. Thorpe and the difficulty of finding persons of ability with a *sufficient local knowledge* of the Country and its commerce in which the Merchants of Montreal are so much interested are the motives which had induced our friends so strongly to recommend Mr. Henry." (London, Mar. 19, 1808.) Canadian Archives, Q. 311-2, p. 425.

Lieut.-Governor Gore, however, knew Mr. Henry for an adventurer "not even called to the Bar", and doubtless Lord Castlereagh was given his opinion on the matter.

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John Henry was not the man to leave opportunities of impressing himself upon the Government unused. If we may trust a phrase in a letter written later (July 2, 1811) to "Dear Henry" by Mr. H. W. Ryland, Secretary to the Governor-General, Sir James Craig, it was no less a person than the secretary himself who gave him an opinion . . . "as to [his] best mode of obtaining an employment under government".¹ The mode indicated reveals itself on March 2, 1808, that is seventeen days before the merchants in London sent in their petition to Lord Castlereagh. John Henry is in Vermont writing to Mr. Ryland—and he wrote well—on the embargo, on the growing anti-British feelings, on the war spirit in the United States at large and on the supposed pro-British sentiment of New England. Other letters followed, the last two from Boston. Mr. Ryland duly handed these over to the Governor-General, who in turn forwarded them to Lord Castlereagh, Secretary of State, as being from "a gentleman of considerable ability and well able to form a correct judgment on what he sees passing" (April 10, 1808).² Two other letters followed from Henry and were duly transcribed and sent to the noble Lord in London. In a letter written by Ryland for Sir James Craig on January 26, 1809, we see the further development of the clever scheme. The Governor-General wishes Henry to undertake a secret and confidential mission of enquiry in the United States. The letter of instructions soon followed. Henry is to go to New England and inform the Governor through Mr. Richardson, (merchant and fur-trading magnate, a member of the Legislative Council and the source of much of

¹ Niles : *Weekly Register*, v. 2, p. 26.

² Q. 107, p. 111. The Henry correspondence is printed in *Report of Pub. Arch. of Canada*, 1896, and in Niles: *Weekly Register*, vol. 2.

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the Government's knowledge of affairs in the States) of "the state of the public opinion both in regard to their internal politics and to the probability of a war with England", and "if the Federalists should obtain a decided influence and should look to England for assistance and wish to enter into any communication with our Government" through the Governor-General, Henry is authorized, with credentials duly drawn up, to transmit it safely to His Excellency.

It would appear, then, that the episode of the "Henry Letters" is much less a plot to spy on the States and to drive a wedge between the Federalists and the Government of the Republic, than a well-devised scheme to place the skilled letter-writer and adventurer in a comfortable office under the Government of Canada. Henry left on his mission immediately after February 10 and was recalled by letter dated May 4—a short time for an individual, single-armed and with none but his private resources, to do much towards disrupting the American Republic. In a letter of May 1 preparing Henry for his recall, Mr. Ryland signs himself "heartily and affectionately yours" and says that the letters he has been writing while on his mission are being transcribed to be forwarded to London, that they cannot fail of doing him great credit and they may eventually contribute to his permanent advantage.

All this is the result of the fur-trade magnates taking up and petting Mr. John Henry. No doubt he had awakened in them an affection such as he had aroused in the breast of the Governor-General's Secretary. From Mr. Joseph Frobisher's *Journal*¹ of his daily dinners and the company at them we can catch a glimpse of Mr.

¹ *Masson Papers*; the original is in the Library of McGill Univ.—a copy in the Pub. Archives of Canada.

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Henry's social triumph in Montreal. The first mention of him among something like a dozen is that of September 7, 1807:—

“Dined at Home—Company	
Chief-Justice Allcock.....	1
Messrs. Craigie, Clarke, Todd, McGill, Govr. Gore ¹	5
Broroit, Featherstonhoe, Ellice, Wm. & D. M'Gillivray.....	5
Rod & Harry McKenzie, J. Hallowell & Wells	4
[Mr. Justice] J. Reid, Henry Ogden, S. Sewell, Capt. Henry.....	4
Major Hamilton.....	1
<hr/>	
20”	

The reader will note that both William and Duncan M'Gillivray were present. On Saturday, January 2, 1808, Mr. Joseph Frobisher's *Journal* tells us, Mr. John Henry was guest of the Beaver Club. On February 7, 1809—the day after Henry's instructions from Sir James Craig were drawn up, Mr. Frobisher's entry runs:—

“Tues. 7—Dined at Home.	
Company—Mr. Caldwell, Quebec.....	1
Col. Murray, Majr. Hamilton & Capt. Martin.....	3
Capt. Dawson, Lieut. Hugo, & R. Dunn.....	3
Col. Vincent, Capt. Clerk & Capt. By.....	3
Major Shekelton, & Mr. John Henry.....	2
Messrs [Wm.] M'Gillivray, Shaw, (McDonald & Whipple).....	4
Messrs McGill, Todd, Storrow & Auldjo.....	4
Mr. Justice Ogden & Mr. Justice Reid.....	2
Doctor Kennelly of Kingston and myself.....	2
<hr/>	
24”	

¹ Govr. Gore's name is crossed out, as though invited and not present.

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Returned from the United States, John Henry devoted himself to securing coveted office, but British officialdom was slow. One cannot help wondering whether Sir James Craig had not now some suspicions of his secretary's little plan. Henry found it wise to cross to England to prosecute his claims for reward for his secret mission in England. He was taken up by the merchants in London trading with Canada and was made a member of the Canada Club, the English counterpart of the Beaver Club of Montreal. But the rulers of the land were still unaffected. These offered no return for services which, no doubt, the adventurer had come to magnify greatly. Henry sent in a memorandum of his services directly to Lord Liverpool who had succeeded Lord Castlereagh. All that he obtained was a letter from the noble Lord to Sir George Prevost, Craig's successor, speaking of the "benefit the public service might derive from his [Henry's] active employment in some public situation" (Sept. 16, 1811).

John Henry now gave up operating for office against the British Government. His hope lies in America. He is to pass for a desperate spy sent into New England by the Governor of a British Colony to intrigue for the disruption of the American Republic. On December 24, 1812, he landed in Boston and forthwith set the wheels in motion for the sale of copies of his letters written to Sir James Craig. Some news of his intention must have reached Montreal for the French adventurer "Count de Crillon" of Henry's acquaintance bore testimony to the Congressional Committee of Foreign Relations that one Gillivray, no doubt his friend William M'Gillivray, had come down from Quebec (sic) to New York to dissuade him. Henry's reply was "The Rubicon is passed".¹

¹ Niles: *Weekly Register*, vol. 2, p. 68.

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Finally the American Government bought the letters for \$48,000—a very large sum in proportion to the total revenues of that day.

It would take us too far afield to discuss the contents of the letters or the aims of President Madison in purchasing them. To a calm public mind, they would appear harmless enough. No doubt, the President aimed at the results actually attained. He sent them to Congress with a message dated March 9, 1812, and Congress ordered them to be printed. Immediately the American public—or at least a part of it—went into an uproar at the insidious plots of the British Government to disrupt the young American Republic. With this mood prevailing, the War of 1812 was a certainty.

But our interest is in Mr. John Henry, Mr. Wm. M'Gillivray's friend. He found a cheque for \$48,000 inconveniently large and got it changed for smaller cheques and bank notes at the Mechanics Bank, Baltimore. What could he do with the gift of fortune at last in his hand? His days of adventure over he will settle as a respected and beloved landowner in the south of France. According to the French adventurer, the "Count de Crillon's" testimony, Henry came into his apartment and said:—"Crillon, you must sell me St. Martial (an estate of the deponent's in Lebeur, near the Spanish frontier); you have the title papers with you; my name will be rescued from oblivion by living near Crillon, the habitation of your ancestors and of a man who has been my friend." The sale was effected for 400,000 francs. On the day on which President Madison sent Henry's letters to Congress the plausible Irish adventurer made a picturesque exit out of American history on no less a ship than the United States despatch boat, *The Wasp*,

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bound for France. In following out the life of John Henry one feels one is tracing a path through a tangled forest and coming upon many an astonishing turn, but the most surprising of all is the last. When Henry reached France, he discovered that the Count de Crillon's estates did not exist, or if they existed, were the possession of the rightful Count of that name.

Needless to say, Mr. John Henry was now out of favour with the fur-trading magnates of Montreal and London. His name may be seen on the records of the Canada Club in London stricken off by the resolution of the members.¹ It must be, then, that some time before this the hour of his eclipse, but after the death of Duncan M'Gillivray, Esquire in April, 1808, while Henry was in high favour in Montreal society and dining with Wm. M'Gillivray and a distinguished company at the home of Joseph Frobisher that the "Ms Journal of the late Duncan M'Gillivray, Esquire" passed from William's hand to that of 'his friend John Henry, Esqr'.

* * * *

The Introduction is intended to be a swift account of the course of the fur trade on the River Saskatchewan in the early days. The Journal itself gives, with a sharpness of outline far beyond the ordinary, the story of a year of life and trade within a typical North West Company's post in the prairie region and yet within reach of the beaver country. The two are thus intended to be complementary, the one to the other.

As the whole work is slight it has not been thought necessary to give elaborate arguments for any fresh views which may have been taken in the Introduction.

¹ I am indebted to Professor McArthur, of Queen's University, for this fact.

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Also, as several bibliographies already exist, it has been considered unnecessary to add to their number. Careful reference to original sources, manuscript and printed, has been regarded as sufficient. Apart from the Journals of David Thompson, in the Ontario Archives, the manuscript material used is to be found in the original or in copy in the Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

The editor finds this not only a fitting but a very pleasing opportunity of expressing for himself and for the increasing number of writers of history who frequent the Archives their great sense of the value of the institution for the fresh interpretation of the history of our nation, and in a very special way the indebtedness of one and all to Dr. Doughty and his associates for the generous way in which the wealth of material in their care is placed at the scholar's disposal.

INTRODUCTION

The term Canadian North West brings to our minds a vision of a wide expanse of prairie,—mile upon mile of the golden gleam of wheat in the early autumn. Not so with the traders of the North West Company. To them the North West was a region of lake and stream and forest, the home of the beaver and the otter and the silver fox. In truth, there are two North Wests—a succession of great prairies and a long forest belt. While the climate of the two is to all intents the same, their soil and their rainfall are in marked contrast. The first, the prairie region, has but enough moisture for the grasses—in modern times for wheat and the like. It extends, roughly, to the valley of the Northern Saskatchewan. The second region lies between this and the height of land of the Churchill and the Mackenzie Rivers, facing the Arctic Ocean. Its moisture is such that it is, as has been said, a land of forest, lake and stream. It is one vast belt of woods running, so far as we are concerned, from Grand Portage and Fort William on Lake Superior northwestward, past Lakes Winnipeg and Manitoba, beyond the lower Saskatchewan, the Churchill and the Athabasca and Peace Rivers to the Rockies. Its streams afforded the fur-trader his means of transportation; its lakes abounding in fish provided his sustenance—often his only sustenance—as he plied his trade; its denizens, the beaver in the creeks, that great fish-eater, the otter, on the large rivers and on the lakes, and the silver fox in its darkest depths gave him a harvest of furs precious almost as gold. This, the fur-trader's North West, was in very truth the Eldorado of his dreams.

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The first European to suspect its existence was Pierre-Esprit Radisson, and with him his relative by marriage Médard Chouart, called des Groseilliers.

The destruction of the Huron villages by the Iroquois in 1650 and the flight of their people to the west of the Great Lakes—some even it would appear to the valley of the Mississippi—was a great blow to the French fur trade, for the tribes east of the lakes were the middlemen, transmitting the furs of the North West to the French settlements on the St. Lawrence. But it proved to be the means of leading the French to the greatest of the sources of fur, as Radisson suggests:—

“Yett if [the Hurons] has the same liberty that in former dayes they have had, we poore French should not go further with our heads [rulers] except we had a strong army. Those great lakes had not so soone comed to our knowledge if it had not been for those brutish people; two men had not found out the truth [secret] of these seas so cheape; the interest and glorie could not doe what terror doth at the end.”—*Voyages*, p. 188.¹

In 1654, old Indian allies of the French assembled at Michilimakinac in sufficient numbers to venture the voyage to Three Rivers on the St. Lawrence with their valuable cargoes in the face of the ever-present menace of the Iroquois. Two Frenchmen, probably referred to in the above quotation from Radisson's *Voyages*, returned to the Upper Country with them. Hereafter the furs of the Great Lakes and even the wooded belt beyond were brought down by Indians from Michilimakinac in a somewhat unsteady and uncertain way. In 1658, Chouart and Radisson, already on the search for the ultimate source of the fur-trade, joined the Indians of that year as they re-

¹ Ed. by Scull for the Prince Soc., Boston, 1885.

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turned. When they came to the parting of the ways at Michilimakinac, instead of going to the North West, they followed their companions to the south-west to Green Bay on Lake Michigan. Radisson seems even to have visited fugitive Hurons on the Mississippi—possibly the first European to touch its waters.

In this sojourn in the Upper Country, Radisson did not fail to note that the Indians with whom he consorted barred him from access to the Crees who were the real beaver-hunters and that the furs which the Indians sold to the French came mostly from the north. Moreover, he got to know Crees and heard from them of the “Bay of the North”. Accordingly, when he took his furs down to the St. Lawrence, he was already determined to return and penetrate into this country. During his sojourn on Lake Superior in the years 1661-1663 and while on his journey beyond it, if he cannot be said with certainty to have reached the arm of Hudson Bay, known as James Bay, he at least came to know the true beaver country. His companion throughout had been Chouart. The two adventurers returned to the St. Lawrence, the happy possessors of furs worth 70,000 livres, but they had penetrated to the North West without a license from the Governor, indeed forbidden of him to go. Hence a succession of penalties in the shape of fines amounting in all to 24,000 livres. The issue of this injustice, as Radisson felt it to be, was that he and Chouart threw themselves upon the English for support. They brought Englishmen, soon to be known under the name of The Hudson’s Bay Company, by the shortest and cheapest route to the fringe of the forest home of the beaver. At Fort Charles on the Rupert River and later at Fort York

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and other factories on the shore of Hudson Bay they began a trade which is with us to this day.

However, the policy of the English was far from being that of Radisson. They refused to go deep into the country or to track the furs out to their very source. In the seventeenth century, British merchants as a habit, if not as a conscious policy, avoided getting too deeply involved in countries like India and the Hudson Bay. All they asked for was leave to do business, and, given that, they shunned every possible complication with the natives. They took good care not to have to keep up regiments of soldiers or even bodies of police. Accordingly, the Hudson's Bay Company erected their factories on the shores of the Bay and enticed the Indians to come down to trade their furs for guns and ammunition, blankets and beads. This policy, inglorious as it may seem and involving but a small turnover, nonetheless, meant much smaller actual expenses and potential liabilities. Moreover, it provided furs sufficient for the market and avoided a break in the prices. In truth it appears to have brought large profits and that after all was the chief matter of concern. Of course it presupposed a field free from competition and the Company was fortunate indeed in having no real rival in the country for three-quarters of a century save during the wars of William III and Marlborough. The policy of the French in waiting for the Indians to come down to their posts on Lake Superior was not essentially different from that of the English.

The situation, however, changed when La Vérendrye, under the guise of an explorer, entered the country. His plan was manifestly that of Radisson,—to seek out the furs at their very source. We may look on the course

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which he and his sons and his successors followed, as that of a group of men feeling their way into the wooded home of the beaver in order to divert the stream of furs to the valley of the St. Lawrence and thereby maintain a trade already threatened with decline. They entered the forest belt at Grand Portage, making the fort on the Kaministiquia their base. They built posts in succession at the outlet of Rainy Lake (Fort St. Pierre, 1731), at the bay which forms the north-west angle of the Lake of the Woods (Fort St. Charles, 1732), and at the mouth of the Red River, removing later to the right bank of the River Winnipeg near Lake Winnipeg (Fort Maurepas, 1734). Though they had promised to build a fort among the Crees at the north end of that lake, they were drawn away southward by the necessity of a voyage to the Missouri to placate the unintelligent ambition of the French Minister Maurepas to force a way through to the Western Sea. Even so they veered round to the southern edge of the forest lands when they followed the Assiniboine and established Fort la Reine, (at our Portage la Prairie, 1738). They resumed the true bent of their policy in building Fort Dauphin on the stream which flows out of the lake of that name, 1741, Fort Bourbon on the west side of Cedar Lake not far from the Saskatchewan River, 1741, and finally Fort Paskoyac, at the present Le Pas, 1748. All these last forts were in a rich beaver region, but not as rich as the English River and the Athabasca country later proved to be. As the Frenchmen went forward, feeling their way, it was natural that they should pass by the comparatively small streams running out from Pine Island Lake, but which really were the waterway to the finest of all fur countries. The broad and inviting stream of the Saskatchewan

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lured them on. They built a fort about two and a half days' journey beyond the mouth of the Sturgeon River, as given on Arrowsmith's map,¹ and another, possibly near the present Fort-à-la-Corne, about twenty miles below the Forks of the Saskatchewan (1753).² They must have felt that they were in the beaver country—as indeed they were, but not in the very heart of it.

The Hudson's Bay Company was not slow to counter this offensive of the French fur trade. In 1754, they sent in Anthony Hendry from York Factory to explore the situation. He passed up the Carrot (Root) River valley out on to the great plains, penetrated to the Blackfoot country beyond Red Deer River, and spent his winter trapping within sight of the Rockies. On Dec. 24, on a rising ground, north of the Red Deer River, he had an extensive view of the prairie country, "which will be the last this trip inland". He then drifted north-eastward to a branch of the Red Deer River, (*i.e.* the Saskatchewan, which the Assiniboinés and Crees knew as the Red Deer River)³. This branch was the Northern Saskatchewan and the point reached was not far below Edmonton. Here he and the Indians who had been hunting around him built their canoes. Shortly after St. George's Day, April 23, which all celebrated with flags, speeches, drumming and feasting, they started down the river. Their flotilla of twenty canoes grew as they skirted along south of the forest belt, for the Indians of the north were skilled in the use of the canoe, while the people of the plains were ignorant of it. By the time it reached the first French fort, apparently at the Cadotte Rapids, some sixty miles below the Forks, it had grown to sixty canoes strong. At

¹ Cocking's *Journal*, August 8th, 1772.

² For the probable site of this post see note p. 19.

³ See note p. 13.

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this post, à la Corne, and at Fort Paskoyac at Le Pas, the enticements of French brandy proved stronger than all the promises to go down with Hendry to the factory at the Bay, and the Indians traded many of their finest furs. Nonetheless, when the flotilla proceeded towards York Factory, it numbered seventy canoes.

The importance of Hendry's *Journal*¹ lies in its revelation of the wide ramifications of the English fur-trade in the face of French opposition and probably from long before. Indians hunted beaver as far west as within sight of the Rockies and descended the Northern Saskatchewan with their families to Nipawi. Here at "the place where one stands and waits", as the name signifies, on the edge of the prairies where the food supply was abundant, the families were left to await the return of their lords, or perhaps they drifted to the Carrot River Valley where Hendry's Indians found their people. On the return from the Bay the dusky traders, once more with their wives and children, wandered across the prairies, hunting, drumming, dancing and feasting in a land of plenty all the way to their wintering grounds in beaver country, far up the Saskatchewan.

It has been the custom to think that the La Vérendryes entered an unoccupied country. This is only true in the sense that the English had built no forts, made no "settlements" as they were called. That the English fur-trade was as wide as the Hudson's Bay Company's charter was ultimately interpreted to read, is manifest from the La Vérendrye documents and Anthony Hendry's *Journal*. Indians from Lake of the Woods, from the Red River and the Assiniboine, and from the Saskatchewan to within sight of the Rockies, frequented the

¹ Ed. by L. J. Burpee in *Transactions of Royal Society of Canada*, 1908.

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forts on the Bay, trained to do so by the Merchant Adventurers and lured by their guns and ammunition.

It is indicative of the reluctance of the English to give up their policy of keeping to the Bay, sanctioned by three quarters of a century of success, that Anthony Hendry did not go in to make "settlements" to cut off the French from their new-found trade, but rather to persuade the Indians to "go down to the Fort and get guns". Yet the Hudson's Bay Company was within sight of some such change of method. A rivalry less intimate and generous than that which we see in the pages of Duncan M'Gillivray, because between competing hostile races, might have now sprung up between the English and the French fur-traders but for the Seven Years' War and the conquest of Canada by the English. These turning points in the great struggle for world empire brought this opening chapter in the history of the North West to a sudden close. The Hudson's Bay Company was given a respite from rivals for near another score of years. Even when the English merchants of Montreal were begging for an open Indian Territory, the Company of Adventurers was safeguarded from competition by the adherence of the Imperial Government to the policy that the Indians must come down to the forts and trade under the eye and with the protection of the Government's Indian Agents.

The first English fur-trader from Montreal appeared on the Saskatchewan in 1767. It was James Finlay, the father of the Finlay who figures in M'Gillivray's *Journal*. He was followed by the Mr. Currie¹, of whom

¹ Matthew Cocking on August 9, 1772, passed an "old house; one Mr. Finlay from Montreal resided in it five years ago". This would be 1767. However, the earliest fur-trading license I have seen as granted to Finlay was in 1769. Cocking mentions Curry as being at Cedar Lake on the Saskatchewan in the year of his journey up that river, 1772, and his Chief, Andrew Graham, added this note on the manuscript: "Mr. Currie's encroachment was the reason I sent Mr.

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Sir Alexander Mackenzie says:—"He determined to penetrate to the furthest limits of the French discoveries in that country. . . . For this purpose he procured guides and interpreters who were acquainted with the country and with four canoes arrived at Fort Bourbon. . . . His risk and toil were well recompensed, for he came back the following spring with his canoes filled with fine furs, with which he proceeded to Canada, and was satisfied never again to return to the Indian country." *Voyages*, p. viii.

The Hudson's Bay Company quickly replied to this invasion by sending in Matthew Cocking (1772-3) from York Factory to explore the situation. He passed up the Saskatchewan, at least as far as Nipawi, "where the Natives wait for their friends", as he says, ("The Falls" on Arrowsmith's map), when he began, like Anthony Hendry, to travel overland along routes followed by the Indian fur-traders. It was a country of 'hillocks, with short grass, low willows and ponds in places' and 'the Indians told him that in winter the buffalo were plenty there, which was confirmed by the quantity of dung on the ground'. He crossed the South Branch of the River Saskatchewan near the edge of the wooded region, probably at Gardepuv's Crossing, of after times, and near the later sites of the Forts on the South Branch mentioned by Duncan M'Gillivray as being attacked by the *Gros Ventres*. He penetrated, like Anthony Hendry, into the prairies between the two branches of the river as far as the country of the Rapid Indians, (also called Fall Indians and *Gros Ventres*). Then he

Cocking inland". (T.C.R.S., 1908, sect. 3, p. 99). Curry's wonderful year must have been in 1771-2. Thos. Curry was given a license to go to the Kaministiquia in 1767. As his name does not occur in the list of those licensed to go to the "N.W." (Fort la Reine, Fort Dauphin, Rainy Lake, and Lake of the Woods), he must have remained on Lake Superior till 1771.

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crossed from the Eagle Hills into the land north of the Saskatchewan, turning eastward. He finally built canoes for his return journey on the edge of the woods near the later Fort Carlton, or perhaps Hudson's House of Arrowsmith's map. While Cocking was on his way down the Saskatchewan, the Hudson's Bay Committee in London decided to give up its time-honoured policy of waiting for the Indians to bring their furs to the Forts on the Bay and to send Samuel Hearne to establish a post at Basquia (Le Pas of to-day) with Mr. Cocking. It may be assumed that it was Cocking who determined the site at a strategical point on Pine Island Lake where the waterway from the English River and Athabasca comes down to the Saskatchewan. The Indians north of this point were to go to Fort Churchill as of yore, but should they turn to trade with the enemy on the Saskatchewan they would be intercepted by the servants of the Company and induced to do their business with their old friends and creditors come inland to meet them. The fort built with this end in view was Cumberland House.¹ The Factor was Samuel Hearne, and with him was Matthew Cocking. The year was 1774. (Hearne had recently returned from his discovery of the Coppermine River.)

It was none too soon. In that very year Mr. Joseph Frobisher from Montreal penetrated into the English River region and intercepted the Indians on their way to the Bay. More honourable than himself, the savages were reluctant to trade with the furs which were due the Company for

¹ Fort York was headquarters for this part of the inland trade of the H. B. Co. The goods arrived in ships from England, usually late in August, and were taken in canoes up the Hayes and Hill rivers, by Knee Lake, Holy (Oxford) Lake, the Echimamish and East rivers, Play-green and Winnipeg lakes, to the Saskatchewan. See Arrowsmith's map. The site of the first Cumberland House was one mile east of the one given in the map.

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debts contracted, but at last, he had his way with them. In 1775, Alexander Henry, the elder, also from Montreal, probably accompanied by Mr. J. B. Cadotte, an old French fur-trader, was on the way to the Saskatchewan. As he travelled, he was joined by Mr. Peter Pond, "a trader of some celebrity in the North West". Later he was overtaken by Joseph and Thomas Frobisher, and a Mr. Patterson¹, (partner of James McGill, Montreal). Together they passed out of the Saskatchewan into Pine Island Lake. At Cumberland House, Mr. Samuel Hearne was away. Mr. Cocking was in charge. Here the canoes separated. Mr. Pond retraced his steps and wintered on Lake Dauphin. Mr. Cadotte, after whom probably the rapids called Cadotte on the more recent survey map were called, went to Fort des Prairies on the Saskatchewan near the present Fort à la Corne, some twenty miles below the Forks. Messrs. Frobisher and Henry "steered for the Churchill or Missinipi to the east of Beaver Lake". We may note that the meat at their fort, built in the heart of the forest, was beaver and bear meat, but above all fish. Mr. Cocking at Cumberland House, we are told, subsisted wholly on fish.

In January, Mr. Henry returned to Cumberland House and tramped through the snow up the frozen Saskatchewan to Fort des Prairies, where Mr. Cadotte was now trafficking. Henry was greatly struck by the fare at this fort in contrast with what he had been enduring in the forest belt.

"At Fort des Prairies I remained several days hospitably entertained by my friends who covered their tables with the tongues and marrow of wild

¹ A memorandum in the Canadian Archives without date but filed among the 1774 licenses indicates that a fur trader's license was to be granted to James McGill and Charles Patterson to go to Grand Portage with five canoes. The value of the goods was £2000.

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bulls (buffalo). The quantity of provisions which I found collected there exceeded everything of which I had previously formed a notion. In one heap, I saw fifty ton of beef, so fat that men could scarcely find a sufficiency of lean.

"I had come to see the Plains. . . . The Plains cross the river Pasquayah, Kejeeche-won, Saskatchewan, or Shascatchiwan, a little above Fort des Prairies." *Travels and Adventures*, ed. Bain, p. 275-6.

In fact Henry was in a different North West. We need not follow him on his visit to the Assiniboines out on the prairies, any more than to say that here again he was greatly struck with the abundance of the food and of the necessaries of life among the Indians of the Plains.

"They [the Assiniboines] continued with us [on the return to Fort des Prairies] . . . selling their skins and provisions for trinkets.

It is not in this manner that the Northern Indians dispose of the harvest of the chase. With them, the principal purchases are the necessaries; but, the Osinipoilles are less dependent on our merchandise. The wild ox alone supplies them with everything which they are accustomed to want. The hide of this animal, when dressed, furnishes soft clothing for the women; and, dressed with the hair on, it clothes the men. The flesh feeds them; the sinews afford them bow-strings; and even the paunch . . . provides them with that important utensil, the kettle. The amazing numbers of these animals prevent all fear of want; a fear which is incessantly present to the Indians of the north." *Ibid.*, p. 317-8.

The Fort des Prairies of this time was sufficiently important to merit the insertion of Henry's description of it.

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“Fort des Prairies . . . is built on the margin of the Pasquayah or Sascatchiwaine, which river is here two hundred yards across, and flows at the depth of thirty feet below the level of its banks. The fort has an area of about an acre, which is enclosed by a good stockade, though formed only of poplar, or aspen-wood such as the country affords. It has two gates, which are carefully shut every evening and has usually from fifty to eighty men for its defence.

Four different interests were struggling for the Indian trade of the Sascatchiwaine; but, fortunately, they had this year agreed to join their stock and when the season was over, to divide the skins and meat. This arrangement was beneficial to the merchants.” Ibid., p. 319-20.

The presence of these interests combined as one on the Saskatchewan in 1775-6 was followed very soon by the establishment of a fort by the Hudson's Bay Company farther up the river to cut off the Indians above from “the pedlars”, as the Englishmen called them. The site chosen was the north bank of the river some forty miles above the present Prince Albert, on the border of the forest area and the prairies, like the rival fort below. It was somewhere near the point where Mr. Cocking had made his canoes for the return voyage. The builder of the post, called after an employee, Hudson's House, was Mr. Philip Turnor. The time seems to be 1776 and 1777. If so, Mr. Turnor had for his neighbour and rival at Sturgeon River, a little farther down the Saskatchewan, no less a person than Peter Pond, map-maker and murderer as he proved himself to be later—the most enigmatical of all the fur adventurers of the West. Mr. Turnor, who was a surveyor to the Hudson's Bay Company and teacher of surveying to David Thomp-

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son, surveyed this part of the river. No doubt his work was reflected in the map of Arrowsmith, a part of which is reproduced at the end of this volume.

With the fragmentary evidence to hand it is difficult to piece together into a consistent picture what was happening on the Saskatchewan in the subsequent years. It seems evident, however, that as beaver became scarce in one part of the river, the forts were moved up to the next beaver region. The buffalo they had always with them to the south on the park grass-lands which were, so to say, the fringe of the great forest belt, and the wintering ground of the great herds. In 1780, the traders were at the Eagle Hills, which Alexander Henry, the younger, says were then good beaver country. A Mr. Cole was at Fort Montagne d'Aigle (Eagle Hills Fort), which David Thompson's itinerary places nine miles below the Battle River and on the north side. M'Gillivray's *Journal* shows that Peter Pangman had a post of his own in the immediate neighbourhood. Mitchell Oman's account, to be quoted below, tells us that the Hudson's Bay Company too had taken up a position in the Eagle Hills, along with two rival Canadian traders.

We find now a definite hostility among the Prairie Indians towards the fur-traders. It is in contrast with the happy relations of earlier days and suggests mishandling of the savages on the part of the Whites. Alexander Henry, the younger, who, by the way, was the nephew of the Henry whom we have already met, and who came into this country in 1808, tells the story of Eagle Hills Fort.

“1808. Sep. 9.—Passed old Fort Montagne d'Aigle now a heap of ruins, in a low bottom on the

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N. side. This is the place where the traders who wintered in 1779-80 had a battle with the Crees in the spring of 1780, when one of the traders was killed by a Canadian [French Canadian] and one Cree. The traders were obliged to abandon their property to the mercy of the Indians, who pillaged and destroyed most of it.”¹

Sir Alexander Mackenzie refers to the mishandling of the savages very explicitly.

“These [successes in the Athabasca regions] however, were but partial advantages and could not prevent the people of Canada from seeing the improper conduct of some of their associates, which rendered it dangerous to remain any longer among the natives. Most of them who passed the winter at the Saskatchiwine, got to the Eagle hills, where, in the spring of the year 1780, a few days previous to their intended departure, a large band of Indians being engaged in drinking about their houses, one of the traders, to ease himself of the troublesome importunities of a native, gave him a dose of laudunum in a glass of grog, which effectually prevented him from giving trouble to any one, by setting him asleep for ever. This accident produced a fray, in which one of the traders, and several of the men, were killed, while the rest had no means to save themselves but by a precipitate flight, abandoning a considerable quantity of goods, and near half the furs which they had collected during the winter and spring.

About the same time, two establishments² in the Assiniboine river, were attacked with less justice, when several white men and a greater number of Indians were killed. In short, it appeared, that

¹ Henry's *Journal* has been published by Coues under the title: *New Light on The Early History of The Greater Northwest*, N.Y., 1897.

² For the incident at Fort de Tremble, see *Journal of Alex. Henry, the younger*, vol. 1, p. 292; and John Macdonell: *Some Account of the Red River* (in Masson: *Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-ouest*, vol I, p. 270).

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the natives had formed a resolution to extirpate the traders; and without entering into any further reasonings on the subject, it appears to be incontrovertible, that the irregularity pursued in carrying on the trade has brought it into its present forlorn situation; and nothing but the greatest calamity that could have befallen the natives, saved the traders from destruction; this was the small pox which spread its destructive and desolating power, as the fire consumes the dry grass of the field." *Voyages*, pp. xiii-xiv.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie goes on to describe the desolating effects of the scourge upon the Indians and upon the fur-trade. Even more explicit is the account given by David Thompson in his *Narrative*. It embodies a statement by Mitchell Oman, a servant of the Hudson's Bay Company, who went through it all himself.

"The great Tribes of the Plains were only known by name to the traders; and the state of the country as described to me by some old furr traders, and particularly by Mitchell Oman, a native of the Orkney Islands, who had been several years in the Hudson's Bay service. He was without education yet of a superior mind to most men, curious and inquisitive, with a very retentive memory. Of those times he said:—

"Our situation was by no means pleasant, the Indians were very numerous, and although by far the greater part behaved well, and were kindly to us, yet amongst such a number there will always be bad men, and to protect ourselves from them we had to get a respectable chief to stay with and assist us in trading, and prevent as much as possible the demands of these Men; there were two houses from Canada, one was under Mr. Cole, who by not taking this precaution got into a quarrel and was shot; The next year, we went up the River about 350 miles

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above Cumberland house and built a trading house which we named Buckingham house and which was situated on the left bank of the River, where it passes through the northern part of the great Plains, which freed us from being wholly among the Nahathaways¹ and allowed the Indians of the Plains to trade with us, and the houses of Canada. But still our situation was critical, and required all our prudence; the following year, as usual, we went to York Factory with the furs, and returned with goods for the winter trade; we proceeded about 150 miles up the River to the Eagle Hills, where we saw the first camp and some of the people sitting on the beach to cool themselves, when we came to them, to our surprise they had marks of the small pox, were weak and just recovering, and I could not help saying, thank heaven we shall now get relief. For none of us had the least idea of the desolation this dreadful disease had done, until we went up the bank to the camp and looked into the tents, in many of which they were all dead, and the stench was horrid; Those that remained had pitched their tents about 200 yards from them and were too weak to move away entirely, which they soon intended to do; they were in such a state of despair and despondency that they could hardly converse with us, a few of them had gained strength to hunt which kept them alive. From what we could learn three-fifths had died under this disease; Our Provisions were nearly out and we had expected to find ten times more than we wanted, instead of which they had not enough for themselves; They informed us, that as far as they knew, all the Indians were in the same dreadful state, as themselves, and that we had nothing to expect from them.

We proceeded up the River with heavy hearts, the Bisons were crossing the River in herds, which gave us plenty of Provisions for the voyage to our

¹ Crees.

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wintering ground. When we arrived at the House instead of a crowd of Indians to welcome us, all was solitary silence, our hearts failed us. There was no Indian to hunt for us; before the Indians fell sick, a quantity of dry provisions had been collected for the next summers voyage, upon which we had to subsist, until at length two Indians with their families came and hunted for us. These informed us, that the Indians of the forest had beaver robes in their tents some of which were spread over the dead bodies, which we might take, and replace them by a new blanket and that by going to the tents we would render a service to those that were living by furnishing them with tobacco, ammunition, and a few other necessaries and thus the former part of the winter was employed. The bodies lately dead, and not destroyed by the Wolves and Dogs, for both devoured them, we laid logs over them to prevent these animals.[""]

From the best information this disease was caught by the Chipaways (the forest Indians) and the Sieux (of the Plains) about the same time, in the year 1780, by attacking some families of the White people, who had it, and wearing their clothes. They had no idea of the disease and its dreadful nature.

From the Chipaways, it extended over all the Indians of the forest to its northward extremity, and by the Sieux over the Indians of the Plains and crossed the Rocky Mountains. More men died in proportion to women and children, for unable to bear the heat of the fever they rushed into the rivers and lakes to cool themselves, and the greater part thus perished." pp. 320-3.

The Chipaways or Saulteurs had their home about the Sault Ste. Marie, but had spread westward through the forest and lake region, which is the present Minnesota. They were now spreading into the buffalo plains north-

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ward to the Red River, and M'Gillivray reports bands as far up as Le Pas and Nepawi, on the Saskatchewan. This would explain their passing the epidemic on to the Forest Indians. The Sioux on the prairies to the south would pass it on to the Snake Indians, who at this time were on the upper reaches of the Missouri. These, in turn, gave it to the Piegans and Blackfeet.

This dire scourge, by decimating the population and taming its spirit, must have greatly reduced the menace which the multitude of the Indians of the Plains constituted for the fur-traders, but the reader of M'Gillivray's *Journal* will note that the adventurers of his day still stood in dread of the swarms which from time to time came to their forts.

Many influences were at work forcing the traders to unite—the menace of the Indians, the failure of the harvest of furs after the epidemic for lack of hunters, the fierce competition among themselves, and especially the pressure of rivalry with such a strong organization as the Hudson's Bay Company, for it was ever present, as the pages of the *Journal* show. Even the difficulty of getting provisions up from Detroit for the canoes in and out from Grand Portage was a factor. On account of the War of Independence the Government excluded all but its own ships from the lakes and maintained a rigid control of all movement of goods. It would be far easier for a recognized company to get permits and transportation for their goods than for an individual trader who might, as the military authorities feared, have to do with the enemy. Under these conditions union was strength, and the traders felt it wise to stand together. Besides, it was seen that competition in the Interior, accompanied as it was by plentiful outpouring of rum, was demoralizing

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to the natives, and in itself bad businesss for the Whites. Hence attempts at union—as for instance in 1775-6 at Fort des Prairies, at the time of Alexander Henry's visit. In 1778 Peter Pond and other traders, particularly the Frobishers, on the English River, pooled their wares in a similar manner, and Pond, representing them all, went with goods to erect an establishment in the Athabasca country. In 1779 the traders at Michilimakinac placed their goods in a common or "General Store". In that year also nine distinct interests entered into an agreement for united business for one year. In this way the trade of the North West was becoming the common property of the traders. This proving successful, the next year a similar agreement was entered into—this time for three years. But the temporary nature of these arrangements left room for individual traders to manipulate the trade with a view to the possible ending of co-operation. At the close of two years this last agreement broke down. The exclusion of Mr. Peter Pangman from the next attempt at union suggests that he was the chief source of trouble, and Peter Pond probably was acting with him. However, one year of the old unrestricted competition, and, no doubt, the diminished supply of furs due to the epidemic of small pox brought the lesson of unity home. In January, 1784, a general agreement was once more arranged to last for five years, and the North West Company was formed. Peter Pangman was not included, and Peter Pond was dissatisfied with the share allotted to him. Pangman secured the support of Gregory, McLeod & Co., who entered the field in opposition to the united traders. This firm sought out the most pushful men available, and it is worthy of remark that it was they who chose

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out and sent to the North West the two Mackenzies—Alexander and his cousin Roderick. Alexander had been in the service of the Company at Montreal, and was now at Detroit engaging in the fur trade. He was sent out in 1785 to the English River, and had under him his cousin Roderick, who had only arrived in Montreal the year before. After what Alexander describes as “the severest struggle ever known in that part of the world”, both sides agreed to unite. In fact all seemed to have grown alarmed at a rivalry which had issued in the murder of Mr. Ross, of the Gregory-McLeod interests, by Peter Pond, of the North West Company, in the unpoliced woods of Athabasca. Hushed by the frenzy of the deed, all the competitors hastened to prevent its recurrence by the union of their business for seven years. Thus at last the full-fledged North West Company came into existence (1787).

The union of all the fur-traders from Montreal in one company only intensified the rivalry between the Canadians and the Englishmen. Wherever the one company built or occupied a fort, the other settled in its immediate neighbourhood, or at least in a position of advantage to check rivals. From Mitchell Oman’s account given above it would appear that in 1779-80 there were two Canadian posts in the Eagle Hills and a Hudson’s Bay house with them. We may argue that such a body of traders in so restricted a beaver country would soon “ruin it” in the sense in which the fur-trader used the term. Accordingly, we find Mitchell Oman next year going farther up the river—he estimated it 350 miles above Cumberland House—and establishing a “Buckingham House”, the first of that name and to be distinguished from the post which lay across the gully from

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Fort George. Oman puts the Eagle Hills 150 miles "up the river", which we take to mean above the Forks, on the North Saskatchewan. As the Forks are about 175 miles from Cumberland House, the Eagle Hills would be about 325 miles up, and this first Buckingham House would be about 25 miles further on. The fur-trader's figures scarcely afford data to enable us to fix the neighbourhood of the fort. We may come to it more closely by assuming that it would have the next "beaver country" in view, viz., the valley of the Battle River. We would expect to find it not very far beyond the mouth of that river, the site of the present Battleford. An old official map places "an old fort" nine miles as one flies beyond the Battle River and five miles below Jack Fish River, which would benear the bridge of the Canadian National Railway crossing the river. This fort is altogether unaccounted for. May it have been Oman's post?

The North West Company would not leave the rival company to reap the harvest alone. They built Turtle Fort¹ one and a half miles below the river of that name and on the south bank of the Saskatchewan. The site would be about four miles due east from Delmas, on the C.N.R. In 1784 Edward Umfreville, an old Hudson's Bay servant, now a Northwester, was cutting off the furs above even this point. He gives us his position from the point where the two branches of the river unite 270 miles below. This would be about 120 miles above the Battle River and perhaps 95 miles beyond Oman's Post. David Thompson's itinerary would place him about 12 miles from Fort Pitt, down the river.

¹ In 1808 Alex. Henry, the younger, describes it as "old". There is no trace of its being occupied in the nineties. It must therefore be of the eighties and would be placed to keep watch on the rival post built by Oman, which we would place provisionally about nine miles further down the river and on the opposite side.

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In 1786 the Hudson's Bay Company's servant, William Tomison, M'Gillivray's neighbour to be, and lately of Lower Hudson's House, moved farther up the river and built Manchester House at the point indicated on Arrowsmith's map. It was then the farthest post westward occupied by the English Company and about 40 miles below Umfreville. The post could still tap the furs of the Battle River valley. David Thompson, now known as explorer and geographical astronomer, was with him, and passed across the Plains to the Piegans on the banks of the Bow River, with whom he wintered. His observations are embodied in his *Narrative* in the chapters on the "Plain Indians". At some date immediately before or after this the North West Company built Fort de l'Isle—the Pine Island Fort of M'Gillivray's *Journal*. It was quite near Manchester House, on an island or a peninsula (*presqu'isle*, hence the name), on the east bank of the river, about half a mile north of the entrance of The Big Gully into the Saskatchewan¹.

About 1788 Thompson returned to Manchester House and descended the river to winter at Lower Hudson's House, on the north bank of the river, about twelve miles above Prince Albert, built to replace Turnor's (upper) Hudson's House, by the Wm. Tomison who figures in M'Gillivray's *Journal*. He then went down to Cumberland House, where he studied surveying under Philip Turnor, whose activities as surveyor we have already mentioned. Meanwhile the North West Company, in the person of Peter Pangman, were exploring the fur resources of the distant Upper Saskatchewan. In 1790

¹ A search for this fort was instituted by me in November, 1927. We identified the island but could not cross to it. Mr. Campbell Innis of Battleford, Secretary of the North West Historical Society, found the site and I visited it with him in November, 1928. The positions of the houses are distinct enough to give an idea of the plan of the interior of the post.

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Pangman put his mark on a tree within sight of the Rockies. It became a landmark under the name of "Mr. Pangman's tree". It was three miles above the later Rocky Mountain House.

David Thompson did not come up the river again till 1793. On October 8th he passed upward from Cumberland House, arriving at the Forks of the Saskatchewan on the 15th. After three days' travel, (that would bring him sixty or seventy miles) up the southern stream, he reached the Hudson's Bay Company's post known as the South Branch House. Its position, according to Peter Fidler, surveyor of the Company, was in latitude $52^{\circ} 53'$, which would be about one mile above Gardepuys Crossing, in fact where Arrowsmith places it vaguely on his map. Not far from it was a North West post bearing the same name. These are the forts referred to in Duncan M'Gillivray's *Journal* as being attacked by the *Gros Ventres*. Doubtless the people at "The South Branch" were not without the usual sense of dread which the traders knew as they faced the Indians of the Plains, for the fort was on the borderland of the prairies.

When the traders came to the Plains they were wont to escape from the tedium of the journey by canoe by taking to horse-back and hunting on the spacious prairies to provide fresh meat for the crew of the brigade. We shall find Duncan M'Gillivray so doing at "The Montée" (from the French *monter*, to mount a horse), near the later Fort Carlton, on the Northern Saskatchewan, over against the South Branch House. Similarly Thompson now took to horse and hunted and rode all the way to Manchester House, which he reached on October 28th. We may assume that the country about this post had already been "ruined", for both companies had built forts farther up within the reach overland of the "strong

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woods" of Beaver River and the upper valley of the Battle. Accordingly, Thompson passes on to the Buckingham House of this time, which he reached on October 31st. He gives its position as latitude $53^{\circ} 52' 7''$ N., where it is placed on Arrowsmith's map. The boats following up the river were caught in the ice somewhere near Battle River, and the goods had to be brought to the fort on horses. Alongside of Buckingham House stood the North West Fort George,¹ the scene of M'Gillivray's activities during the winter of 1794-5, described in the *Journal*. Here Thompson, probably with Mr. William Tomison for chief, "spent the winter (1793-4) keeping, as usual, a meteorological register, taking observations of longitude and latitude and working out his former traverses by latitude and departure" (J. B. Tyrrell).

Our knowledge of Fort George, and indeed of the whole valley of the Saskatchewan at this time, is largely derived from the *Autobiographical Notes*² of John MacDonald of Garth, Duncan M'Gillivray's friend and companion, whom we must now introduce to the reader. It will make greatly for the comprehension of our *Journal* if we travel through the North West hither and thither seeing things with John MacDonald's eyes. As an old man in his eighties MacDonald dictated his reminiscences for the benefit of his grandchildren. We are often teased by his successive fightings with beast and man when so much of greater importance could have been said. Nonetheless we are grateful for the occasional breadth of view

¹ The site of Fort George is in the N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ sec. of Sec. 24, Township 56, Range 6, West of the 4th Meridian. It is about $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles up the river from Moose Creek, and on the north bank.

² In the possession of Mr. Léry Macdonald a descendant; a photostat copy is in the Public Archives of Canada. Masson has published extracts in his *Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-ouest*, vol. 2

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of his remarks and for the many facts and the glimpses of scenery embodied in his boastful account of himself. He begins by tracing the descent of the MacDonalds from a family co-eval with "old Noah" and which escaped from the flood like the patriarch himself, but in a boat of its own. His grandfather came from the Braes of Lochaber and was, of course, descended from the Lords of the Isles, and, it might be taken for granted, fought at Culloden Moor. His father had been an officer in the 84th Highlanders, and he himself would have entered the army but, because of his crippled right arm—hence his name among the voyageurs, "bras croche"—he was reduced to exercising his courage on the distant banks of the Saskatchewan. As his father's place was at Garth, near Callander, in Scotland, and there were other MacDonalds of the name of John even then in the Northwest, he has come to be known as John MacDonald of Garth. His grand-uncle, General Small, met Simon McTavish, agent of the North West Company, in a friendly way, and subsequently bound John as Clerk to that Company for a definite number of years, a condition being that at the end of his "servitude" he was to get a share in the "concern". On the 19th of April, 1791, John sailed from Greenock in the good ship *Quebec*. We omit the story of his challenge to a duel on board the ship. Landed at Quebec he found Mr. McTavish just arrived before him, "who took great care of me". The lad arrived in Montreal on June 5th "in a calash". About June 15th, 1791, he left La Chine "under the patronage of Simon McTavish Esqr. in a large birch canoe, manned by fourteen choice Voyageurs & our Cook—from amongst a crowd of friends & Spectators who were there to witness our departure". Finally he crossed

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Lake Superior in this frail bark and reached Grand Portage.

“At Grand Portage there were great rejoicings at Mr. McTavishes arival. Several Partners were there from the interior as well as the Agents from Montreal who conducted that branch of the business. The *tout ensemble* seemed strange to me—during a stay of perhaps a fortnight here, I had a quarrel with a Clerk, a large Englishman” (John, we may mention, was quite small.)

“I was appointed to be under the care of Angus Shaw,¹ an excellent Trader & a man who managed his Men & Indians well and a kind Bourgeois² to me. We started in his canoe—a much smaller size than the canoes from La Chine until we overtook his Brigade of loaded Canoes, that had left Fort Charlotte, on the North end of Grand Portage some days previous. In two or three days he overtook them when he put me on Board of the Pilot’s or Guide’s Canoe, that I might be with the Brigade in his absence. The guide, one Antyme, took great care of me.”

Thus John MacDonald journeyed to Cumberland House where the Athabasca canoes with Alexander Mackenzie, already the discoverer of the Mackenzie River to the Arctic Ocean, and soon to gaze upon the tidal waters of the Pacific, joined his brigade. MacDonald made his way to “Isle à la Crosse, so named as being a famous resort to the Indians in playing this favorite Game” and thence by the Beaver River, which figures in M’Gillivray’s *Journal*, being north of Fort George, to Lac d’Orignal, Moose Lake,³ where deep in

¹ This is M’Gillivray’s chief through the winter of the *Journal*.

² Bourgeois, “merchant”, “trader”—a term applied to the wintering partners or proprietors.

³ About thirty-two miles north and a little west of Fort George. It was south of the Beaver River.

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the forest belt he spent the winter of 1791-2 under Mr. Shaw.

In the spring MacDonald of Garth, with his chief, went with the brigade to Grand Portage. Alexander Mackenzie had received a recommendation of John from his grand-uncle, General Small, and offered him a place on his expedition across the Rockies to the Pacific, but he had become attached to Mr. Shaw and, expressing his reluctance, finally declined.

MacDonald's orders this year were to take the brigade back as far as Isle à la Crosse, hand it then over to a fellow-clerk named Graeme, and proceed rapidly to Lac d'Orignal and thence across country to the Saskatchewan to join Mr. Shaw at his new post, Fort George. Mr. James Finlay, the son of the Finlay whom we have already met, was to be in the same department, lower down, at Fort de l'Isle, the Pine Island Fort mentioned above.

"I had not been many days at [Lac d'Orignal] when I was rejoiced to see on the opposite point in the Lake the arrival of a couple [of] men & an Indian woman as Guide to them with each a Horse and one saddled for myself & two for my Baggage and provisions. They rested a day or two when I took my departure with them rejoicing at the idea of joining Mr. Shaw again whose kind treatment had attached me to him as a Father. To the Indians he told that I was his little Brother."

This is the unfailing note struck in speaking of Mr. Shaw. He had a real command of his men and at the same time held their affections. A darker shade is thrown in by a note in the Selkirk Papers,¹ which describes him as "enterprising but dissipated". Mr. Shaw had proceeded with the canoes up the Saskatchewan and was

¹Vol. I, p. 187.

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building the new post some 100 miles above Manchester House and Pine Island Fort in a country whose beaver were still untouched.

“After three or four days in Strong Woods we came to the border of the Prairies, when the guide told me to follow an Indian trail which was perceptible. I rode along and met an Indian Hunter on my Path. He stood till within a certain distance, laid down his gun on the grass as much as to say, (seeing me a boy as it were,) Do not be afraid. He pointed my way and I soon arrived at my destination & found Mr. Shaw with about sixty men, putting up Houses & erecting Stockades for Safety & their winter quarters. Mutual congratulations took place. Thus I was as by enchantment transported from Rivers & Lakes, from Portages & Strong Woods to an unknown region of the finest prairies. The new Fort was upon the margin of a fine hummock of Pine—upon a rising Hill or Bank with the noble Saskatchewan in Front—with Banks in that place of Strong Woods for perhaps a mile in Breadth & twenty in length along the River, as it were a Shelter for the different kinds of Deer, particularly the Moose Deer.”

John MacDonald of Garth has a fine sense of the picturesque. Of all who have described the Saskatchewan of those days none felt its lordliness as he.

[1793] “In May we made all due preparation in putting canoes in order—making Batteaux, making Pemican—and packing Furs—& by the 15th were all ready to embark for our rendez-vous at Grand Portage—all afloat upon the Grand Saskatchewan, then at high water from the melting of Snows from the Rocky Mountains & all its tributary streams. It was a Grand Sight to me to see such a Grand River, the innumerable herds of Buffloes & Deers & many grizle Bears on its Banks feeding & crossing in

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such numbers that we often got our canoes amongst them & shot hundreds without need. There lay sometimes upwards of a thousand dead on some low points drowned while crossing in Spring on the ice & washed ashore. Amongst them were to be seen often the Bears feeding upon the carcasses. We, of course, shot as many as were required for our own food & took on board as much as would feed us while it kept fresh and good, generally until we got to Lac Winipeg i.e. we took while we got the Buffloes enough to last us when we could get none—viz. from the Prairies to the Strong Woods, Lakes & Rivers where there are only a chance Deer or a Black Bear—plenty of fish—if time was given to catch them & nets prepared.

“We got all safe to Cumberland Depot,¹ Deposited the Pemican etc. safe for the Northern Departments where nothing of the kind can be much procured. This is the usual way of supply; care was taken if possible to procure a sufficient quantum to enable all the Brigades to proceed without loss of time & all encouragement given the Indians to supply us as want of Provisions would prevent progress & stop the Trade. It is wisely ordered by Providence that this should be so; a second supply also came from Red River. . . . The Depot being at the entrance of River Winipeg—now Fort Alexr.

“We left Cumberland generally 2nd June & made our way in full spirits & health to head Quarters, where as in all future cases we met the Gentlemen from Montreal in good fellowship after twelve months absence. The men were always regaled with plenty—a feast on arrival of Bread & Pork—an unusual diet—& a cup [*coup*] to make them merry; there were usually about 6 or 8 hundred men on the ground on a Summers total.

“We regaled generally about a couple [of] weeks—when we noted, refitted, made up our crews, &

¹ Cumberland House of the N.W. Co. was built that summer, as Mr. Wm. M'Gillivray's *Journal* shows. (Masson Papers, Canadian Archives, vol. 3).

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prepared to return to winter each to his own allotted Department under its appointed Burgeois & Clerks for another campaign. I remember nothing uncommon on this Voyage. We got safe to our winter quarters, Mr. Shaw to the new establishment named Fort George & Mr. Finlay at Fort de L'Isle¹. This season I first met Mr. Hughes. . . . He stopped Providentially with Mr. Finlay & I was to have wintered at Fort George with Mr. Shaw.

“When at Breakfast one Morning in Novr. an express—two men came in from Mr. Finlay wanting assistance. The express was mounted on best Horses:² A war had broke out in Sumr. between the prairie Crees & the Tribe of Mandans & Fall Indians in the Missouri. Several had been killed on both sides. The Missouri Indians knowing that the Crees were in league with the Whites on the Saskatchewan³ determined war upon them also. They killed an old man who went to the Plains to look for his Horses. It was not known first who committed the act i.e. what tribe; when a numerous band of those tribes came to Mr. Finlay under pretence of Trade.⁴ The Fort being on an Island, a boat was employed to cross them & all their effects except their Horses which was left behind under the care of Some Boys. When all crossed they as usual walked into the Fort & began after a short time to Trade what little they had; when they began to be insolent

¹ Duncan M'Gillivray, as his *Journal* shows, was at the Fort this winter, 1793-4.

² There seem to have been two classes of horses on the prairies—“best horses”, often stallions used for hunting, and the other kind, “common horses”.

³ Probably the Crees were getting ammunition from the Whites, and carrying the day over the Fall Indians, whom MacDonald has confused with the Gros Ventres of the Missouri. The remedy aimed at by the latter was to plunder or destroy the traders' post.

⁴ These Indians sacked Manchester House, probably before making this attempt on Fort de l'Isle. “The natives have been and are very hostile to your Honour's servants. They attacked Manchester House last Fall, where only seven resided, plundered the house of every article of trading goods, which they carried away. The men escaped only with the clothes on their backs.” Joseph Colen in charge of York Factory to the Governor of H. B. Co., 1794. (Tyrrell in T.R.S.C., section ii, p. 117).

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Mr. Finlay soon perceived their intentions to overpower himself and men, & murder them & then to pillage the goods. This was at last apparent to all, but poor Mr. Finlay was too great a Coward to take any effective steps tho' they told him they had killed his Old Man¹, saying he would pacify them by presents, when Mr. Hughes though a Novice exclaimed Presents will not do. To arms men—when he seized his own arms the men followed his example, The Indians seeing his resolution fled out of the House & pell-mell—man and woman—swam across the River, Mr. Hughes & his men followed & fired & it is supposed some were killed. Thus Mr. Hughes as brave a fellow (which I often experienced since) as ever trod soil saved Mr. Finlay—his men & property, by his daring conduct.

“As I have said we were at Breakfast quietly when this express was brought to us at Fort George. Though youthful—I could not refrain my disgust with Finlay's conduct saying What with 60 good men to have allowed such insults & requesting more men. Mr. Shaw felt a little angry with me, Mr. Finlay being a Partner, he thought a Boy like me ought not to take such libertys. He said, you say too much my young man. prepare yourself to be off with that express in two days. No appeal to this I prepared and little time was required. The 3rd day we left on Horse Back—very badly clothed or riged out for the cold days of Novr. & only one Blanket under our Sadles.

“In the mean time, Mr. Shaw was informed that a new party had got to the lower parts of the Saskatchewan from Montreal in opposition in the Fur Trade. This made him change his mind. He gave his instructions to me to go first to Mr. Finlay's which was in my way, & then to proceed to Sturgeon River² in the lower parts where the opposition had

¹ His name was Minard. (D. M'Gillivray's *Journal*, Feb. 22).

² The remains of this post were long after seen at the mouth of the Sturgeon River, as it enters the Saskatchewan about four miles above Prince Albert. Alexander Henry, the younger, describes the spot. (Coues ed., p. 488.)

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stopped to winter with a Band of Indians. Then to get a few more from the nearest Settlement & an assistant or Interpreter & to erect some *Chanties* & to oppose with all my might—& with little experience This opposition.

“The nearest Settlement was about 60 miles up the Bow River or South Branch of the Saskatchewan under charge of a Clerk a clever man but too fond of a Glass; from this gentleman I got the Interpreter a faithfull person & ten men, with the necessary tools, goods, etc.

“... We put up the Chantie Store, etc., & passed the winter in broils often. My opponent being an old experienced Trader—Mr. David Grant.¹ It may not be out of the way to mention that in Salutations as customary before day on New Years & getting a glass & cakes, that one of the Bullys considering my age as nothing, in firing purposely shot his Powders through my window,² I of course got enraged & challenged him to single combat with our Guns; this was a check upon him ever *after*.

1794

“I begin every year with every Spring, *i.e.*, with the commencement of every Voyage, our several trips being called in French Voyages.

“In Spring 1794, then I was prepared for Mr. Shaw's arrival from the Upper Department with his large Brigade of Canoes, & Boats, Furs packed up & ready to start; he made his appearance in due time & all³ proceeded to Cumberland Depot &

¹ David Grant was in the North West Company in 1789. The first sign of a break in the Company came in this year (1793), Grant becoming a “free trader” It was a harbinger of the much more serious disruption of 1798 when Alexander Mackenzie created the rival “concern” known as the New or the X.Y. Company.

² Windows in those days were of paper or parchment, *i.e.*, thin skin.

³ Duncan M'Gillivray, included. On Aug. 12, 1793, John Macdonnell mentions Angus Shaw and Duncan M'Gillivray as passing him on their way from Grand Portage to Fort des Prairies (Journal of a voyage . . . to Qu'Appelle River.) MacDonald does not bring M'Gillivray into the country till 1796. The following incident is put by him in 1797. If it took place in the year after M'Gillivray came inland it must have taken place on this “voyage” with MacDonald to Grand Portage.

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from thence to Grand Portage. The ice was unusually late this year. It did not break up in Lac Winipeg untill 10th June consequently we lost much time before we could get on & our Stock of Provisions ran short. We had to make use of some wild vegetables & *tripe de Roch* which when boiled with a little Pemican made a kind of Soup. It is called Lichen I think but Canadians [call it] tripe de Roches. We got safe to Grand Portage, & were greeted as usual."

It may not be out of place to give John MacDonald's account of the doings at Grand Portage during the days immediately before the *Journal* of Duncan M'Gillivray commences.

"Fort Charlotte was . . . on the North end of the Grand Portage a general Depot after crossing the Grand Portage 9 miles long—so called I supposed after Old Queen Charlotte; here we just landed from the Interior & from Fort Charlotte, or Pigeon River all took their Departure to the Interior again. There were extensive stores for Furs & Goods as outfits. There was a Clerk in charge with some men. There was then a Gentleman of a respectable [French] Canadian family in charge. Some few days later after we got a rest at the Lake Superior end of the Grand Portage, the late Simon McTavish who always called me Jack—told me Jack—you must cross the Portage to Fort Charlotte & dismiss Mr. Lemoine the Gentleman in charge, he is charged with some nasty tricks; tell him to deliver you his charge and keys—& come across;

"Out of one danger [a bear hunt] into another—We determined to Bath it being fine warm weather—neither were swimmers—I got out of my depth—& Mr. McGillivray could scarcely save me, he however saw me sink & got far enough in & being a tall man He got hold of a lock of my fine long hair & little by little pulled me towards him untill he grasped my head & pulled me ashore—I had become senseless, but soon recovered—We thought all this was a good days work, but we soon forgot about God's mercy."

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then give charge to another person whom I have forgot—& return yourself immediately.

“I set off—& in my entrance into the House met Mr. Lemoine—& delivered my message. He demured & asked me to show him my orders. I pointed to my tongue & told him I got no other; he saw that it was useless to resist & set off as told, & I returned & reported.

“Some days after, Mr. McTavish called me to him again & said Jack you must cross again, the opposition are picketing out a place for a Fort, too close to ours—with the intent of watching our movements. Go & try & . . . make them move farther off. There is a young Gentleman in charge. I consequently went over & told the young Gentleman (I think it was Allan Sandie McD.¹) that such was the case too nigh and that he must move some space farther. He replied that it was his Master who planted the Pickets, that he had no authority or Power to move such Pickets, that he would be blamed if he did it & would not do it; I immediately said I am not told by any one to do it but to ask you to do it but [if] you will not do so *I must* I have not come over to no purpose—Saying which I suited the action to the word & pulled them up & threw them into the Pigeon River. He made no reply or resistance. I then returned across the Portage & reported what I had done which caused a general laugh amongst the Partners present who said that I was a bold boy. I was still considered a Boy—being but small & delicate.

“In a few days all was ready and the Brigade started for the Interior, Mr. Shaw remaining a few days behind to settle accpts. etc. He overtook us about Lac la Pluie [Rainy Lake]—finally without accident or obstruction we go back to our destination at Fort George. Fort de L’Isle Mr. Shaw thought

¹ This must be the man who figures in the *Journal* of Alex. Henry, the younger, as Allan McDonald, and again as Allan McDonell.

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proper to abandon & Mr. Finlay came down to Montreal.¹

Duncan M'Gillivray's *Journal*, written at the time, gives us a much more explicit account of the "voyage". Very detailed descriptions of the course from Grand Portage to the Saskatchewan are in the elder Alexander Henry's *Travels and Adventures* and in the preface of Sir Alexander Mackenzie's *Voyages*. This course, as well as that followed in after times from Fort William to Rainy Lake and onward, is described very carefully in the younger Alexander Henry's *Journal*. (See edition by Coues.) Something may be said, however, about the organization of the voyage.

The fur-traders were very much more interested in the North Branch of the Saskatchewan than in the Bow River, as they were apt to call the South Branch. The latter took a wide sweep southward into the open prairie region, and however its course might bring the adventurer to the herds of buffalo in the summer, it offered little or no chances of harvesting good furs, and probably even the buffalo were scarce in the open in the winter. The advantage of the Northern Saskatchewan lay in the fact that it ran along the edge both of the wooded belt and of the open prairie. There were many parts of the valley, as they said in those days, a "strong wood" region, offering a harvest of fur. Besides, the furs of the "strong woods" to the north were brought by the Indians to the forts on the North Branch. Finally, the park grass-lands, which formed the fringe of the forest belt were the natural winter home of the buffalo, offering ample grazing but at the same time shelter from the winter's blasts. In the eye of the trader who journeyed with

¹ This would be in the spring of 1795.

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his furs to Grand Portage in the summer but carried on the traffick with the Indians in the winter there could be no choice between the two Branches. Accordingly, save for forts near the Forks on the edge of the wooded belt and the prairie, the Southern Saskatchewan was passed by on the other side.

One notes too, that furs are by no means the sole quest of the traders. Meat *i.e.*, pemican, a mixture of pounded meat and fat in equal parts, possibly flavoured with saskatoon berries—was a principal object on the Saskatchewan and at the prairie posts. When the food supply in the forest belt gave out a call was made, as we can see in M’Gillivray’s *Journal*, on the Forts des Prairies and sleds journeyed northward to relieve the post beleaguered by hunger. Much more frequently—when the pemican supply in the north, made of deer and bear meat, was too slim to bring along the northern brigades from Athabasca without their stopping by the way to hunt and fish, pemican was sent overland to Isle à la Crosse. In fact, the furs which came from the north—English River, Athabasca, and later Peace River—were the supreme source of profit to the fur-trader but it was not possible, even leaving at the breaking up of the ice and returning at the freezing, to bring them out and take back the goods which purchased them, if the brigades had to hunt and fish by the way. Therefore, the distinctive part played by the Saskatchewan, or let us say rather by the Forts des Prairies, was to provide the provisions for the post haste journey to and fro of the Northern Brigades. In this scheme, Cumberland House at the junction of the waterways of the English River Athabasca system and the Saskatchewan, and Fort Alexander, at the mouth of the River Winnipeg, were

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“depots” in the Interior for provisions while Grand Portage played the part on Lake Superior. The brigades from the Forts des Prairies brought tons of pemican down on roughly built boats made no more than for the trip down and deposited their precious cargo at Cumberland House for the Northern Brigades, while the posts at the prairies on the Red River and the Assiniboine stored their gathering at Fort Alexander. On the return, the brigades were provisioned at Grand Portage with corn, as was M’Gillivray’s, and sometimes with wild rice at Lac la Pluie to bring them to Fort Alexander. There, if necessary, they were provisioned with pemican to bring them to Cumberland House, and here in turn provided for their destination or, in the case of the Saskatchewan Brigade, to take them to the prairies where fresh buffalo meat was furnished by the “bourgeois” and their “hunters” who rode along parallel with the canoes. Duncan M’Gillivray’s canoes were supplied with eight bags of corn each at Grand Portage; they stopped two days, doubtless for provisions, at the “bottom of the River Winipeg” (later Fort Alexander) and then went on to Cumberland House. M’Gillivray took to horse at Lower Nipawi. While there was some prairie before him he was really still in the wooded belt and somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Forks on the north bank got into trouble in the bush and ruined his clothes. It was at *La Montée*, that he really took to horse and the hunting began in earnest.

Alexander Henry, the younger, gives us a very explicit statement of the provisioning of his canoes as far as Fort Vermilion, opposite the mouth of the Vermilion or Paint River of M’Gillivray and Painted River of Arrowsmith:

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[1809, Sept. 13.] "At 4 p.m., I arrived at Fort Vermillion having been two months on my voyage from Fort William, with a brigade of 11 canoes, loaded with 28 pieces each and manned by five men and one woman. Our expenditure of provisions for each canoe during this voyage was: two bags of corn, $1\frac{1}{2}$ bushel each, and 15 lbs. of grease, to Lac la Pluie; two bags of wild rice, $1\frac{1}{2}$ bushel each, and 10 lbs. of grease, to Bas de la Riviere Winipic; four bags of pemmican, 90 lbs. each, to Cumberland House; and two bags of pemmican of 90 lbs. each, to serve until we came among the buffalo—generally near the Montée or at farthest the Elbow of the Saskatchewan. This shows the vast quantity of provisions we require yearly to carry on the trade in the N. W. Those brigades which proceed N. W. of Cumberland House, require three additional bags of pemmican per canoe and some a fourth."—*Journal*, p. 539.

As to the freighting of the canoes—the goods from England had been packed in "pieces" of 90 lbs. each at Montreal for convenience in loading the canoes and in carrying the freight across portages. Each man would carry two pieces on his back with the help of a strap resting on his brow. The Saskatchewan canoes, manned by five men and a woman to do the cooking, usually took twenty-five pieces.

The freight consisted of high wines in kegs, sugar in kegs, powder in kegs, balls for shooting in bags, tobacco in rolls which could be unwound, giving out the fragrant weed in the form of a rope, or pig-tail or "twist" to be sold by the length, usually a fathom, or a fraction of a fathom; "irons" *i.e.*, hardware, such as knives, axes (large, medium and small), kettles, awls, etc.; blankets, strouds, beads, etc.; salt.

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Unfortunately, Duncan M'Gillivray does not give us a description of Fort George. We may picture it from the river as a group of rough shanties surrounded by a stockade, on the edge of a fine hummock, overlooking the majestic valley of the Saskatchewan and standing out against the autumnal shades of a belt of "strong woods" a mile deep and twenty miles long. To the east was a gully, immediately beyond which stood the Hudson's Bay post, Buckingham House, likewise surrounded by a strong stockade. A path leads down from each post into the gully to a well there, dug by Mr. Tomison, to supply water sweet and pure to his post, and from which the North-westerners were allowed to draw.

The stockade at Fort George had a gate to the south, facing the river, and one to the north leading out to the "strong woods". As one would go up the gully and climb up the hummock and enter the south gate one would see a series of shacks, mud-plastered on wall and roof for warmth. Immediately facing one, would be the Wintering Partner's quarters, larger than the others, just a little more pretentious. Its principal apartment was "the Indian hall" for receiving the chiefs in ceremony—larger at Fort George than the ordinary. Its inner parts were occupied by the Wintering Partner and his "girl", usually a Chief's daughter, the leaders of Society on the Saskatchewan in 1794. Around this central point were the stores and houses for the clerks, and a series of shanties for the men. The census of Fort Vermilion in 1810 as given by Alexander Henry will give some idea of the number of houses, the total population, and the manner of housing it, which, by the way, rather suggests that each shantie played the part of a modern apartment block.

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House No. 1.

1. Parenteau.....	1	Man.....	1	Woman....	5	Children
2. Perain.....	1	“	1	“	1	child
3. Clement.....	1	“	1	“	2	children
4. Dubois.....	1	“	1	“	1	child
—17 Persons.						

House No. 2.

5. Cardinal.....	1	Man.....	1	Woman....	5	Children
6. Ladouceur.....	1	“	1	“		
7. Ottawa.....	1	“	1	“	3	“
8. Pichette.....	1	“				
—15 Persons.						

House No. 3.

9. Crevier.....	1	Man.....	1	Woman....	1	Child
10. Thibault.....	1	“	1	“	1	“
11. Dumont						
[& another?]	2	Men	1	“	4	Children
12. Lajeunesse.....	1	Man				
—14 Persons.						

House No. 4.

13. Guillion.....	1	Man.....	1	Woman		
14. Durand.....	1	“	1	“	1	Child
15. Carrière.....	1	“	1	“	2	children
16. Martelle.....	1	“	1	“	4	“
17. Le Blanc's wife.....			1	“	2	“
—18 Persons.						

House No. 5.

18. Faille.....	1	Man.....	1	Woman....	4	Children
19. La Pierre.....	1	“	1	“	3	“
20 & 21 Lussier	2	Men	1	Woman	1	Child
[Francois & Joseph]						
22. Gagnon.....	1	“	1	Woman		
—17 Persons.						

House No. 6.

23. Parisien.....	1	Man.....	1	Woman....	6	Children
24. Languedoc.....	1	“	1	“	1	child
25. Croite.....	1	“	1	“	1	“
26. Beauvois	1	“				
—15 Persons.						

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House No. 7.

27. Jérôme.....	1	Man.....	4	Children
28. Rocque.....	1	“	1	Woman....1 child
29. Réhelle.....	1	“		
30. Fleming.....	1	“		

—10 Persons.

House No. 8.

31. Hamel.....	1	Man.....		
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—1 Person.

House No. 9.

32. Mr. Small.....	1	Man.....		
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—1 Person.

House No. 10.

33. Self ¹	1	Man.....	1	Woman....3 Children
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—5 Persons.

Tent.

34. F. Deschamps.....	1	Man.....	1	Woman....4 Children
35. F. Deschamps, Jr....	1	Man.....	1	Woman....1 Child

—9 Persons.

Tent.

36. Martin.....	1	Man.....	1	Woman....6 Children
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—8 Persons.

Totals.....	36	27	67	130 ²
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M'Gillivray gives the population of Fort George as “80 men and near as many women and children”.

When the canoes reached the Fort, the welcome given by those who had been left at home, especially the women and children, would be very great. M'Gillivray, passing Pine Island Fort, lately abandoned, says:—“The men regret the friendly reception that used to await them at this place after the fatigues of the Voyage”. When the men were quartered, and the goods housed, the happiness of the post would express itself in a dance, that is if the ways of Angus Shaw were

¹ 33 is Alexander Henry himself, “her Ladyship”, as he calls her, and his three half-breed children.

² *Journal*, ed. by Coues, pp. 553-4.

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the ways of Alexander Henry; the Hudson's Bay people would be invited if already at their House.

“We had a dance at my home, to which I invited my Neighbour (Mr. Tomison) and his family. All were merry—our men as alert as if they had already rested for a month; but we were very much crowded, 72 men, 37 women and 65 children, and the room being only 22 x 23 feet, made it disagreeably warm.”

Alexander Henry's *Journal*, p. 542.

The season, then, at Fort George, began with a dance, and, as the *Journal* tells us, it ended with races. It was interspersed with hunting parties at such times as business permitted.

One of Mr. Shaw's first courtesies would be to invite the Hudson's Bay people over to breakfast with a view to reaching some understanding as to their trade. The question would be which Indians belonged to this company and which to that. Ordinarily, the men of the rival companies tried to minimize friction. Were they not, all told, but a handful facing hundreds of savages, on a vast plain far from the reach of help in case of tumult? Did not the whole story of the River warn them that the *gens du large*, the people of that wide expanse, might come on them as swiftly as the thunder cloud sweeps across the prairie? This, and the sheer loneliness and monotony of their life bade them observe the courtesies. They drank tea with one another, breakfasted together, and came to one another's rescue in case of a fire or trouble with the Indians. On the other hand, a rigid watch was kept at each post to see that their own Indians, to whom “credit” had been given in the form of ammunition or clothing, did not go with the returns of their hunt to the enemy house. Any incident which be-

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tokened unfairness or seemed injurious to the trade of one party or the other brought a swift eruption of wrath.

John MacDonald of Garth, who dearly loved a wrangle, tells us of a very dry season when the well at the Hudson's Bay Company's post might have gone dry as the gully had already done. By way of precaution, Mr. Tomison, or Thompson as MacDonald wrongly calls him, forbade the North-westerners to draw from the well dug for his fort.

"They allowed us the free use for some time, but at last, apprehensive of its drying up also . . . from the quantity taken from it by so many for all purposes, [Mr. Tomison], a powerful man, refused to allow us further supplies. One man named Lucier came back with his empty Bucket, saying that Mr. [Tomison] came out and sent him back empty—upon which Mr. Shaw told me to go back with Lucier & endeavour to convince Mr. [Tomison] that there would be water enough, that rain would soon fall & the gully would fill up, all would not do. Mr. T. would not listen to any reason, indeed I had little to give him—but that if he would not give us our wants that either of us must pay a visit to the bottom of the well. This argument rather startled him & we got our share of the water ever after." *Autobiog. Notes*, p. 50-1.

When the traders arrived at their fort a large crowd of Indians would be waiting to trade with them. M'Gillivray's *Journal* is chiefly an account of the trade, and the behaviour of the Indians while at the fort. The story explains itself, but it will be well to get a clear view of the Indian world as the fur adventurer saw it,—of its tribes, and of the part the white merchants played in the life of the Indian Nations.

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Arrowsmith's map, drawn in 1795, but corrected to 1818, must be taken as giving what English fur-traders knew of the positions of the various tribes. The opinions of the English adventurers reached the great cartographer through the Hudson's Bay Company. Moreover, the views of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, in his *Voyages* were well known after 1800. They are essentially in agreement with those recorded in the map.

When M'Gillivray came up from Montreal, he would meet at Sault Ste. Marie, Indians of the tribe he first mentions in his pages, viz. the Saulteurs, Men of the Rapids, so called by the French from the Sault. Apparently, the spelling of the word was beyond the Englishmen. M'Gillivray has it Seauteurs, Soteau, and even Soto. These Indians are Ojibways. A "strong woods" tribe, their home was, to begin with, along the shores of Lakes Huron and Superior, as Arrowsmith has them, but they had now expanded westward through the region of wood and lake and stream of what is the present Minnesota to the Red River. An outlying group was to be found on the prairies about the lower Red River. They came in after the decimation of the population by the small-pox. M'Gillivray, if he is correct, meets them as far away as Le Pas on the lower Saskatchewan, and even as far up as Lower Nipawi.

As M'Gillivray passed up Lake Winnipeg and along the Saskatchewan, he would have to the north, all the way to Fort George, the country of the far-flung tribes of the Crees. Their name comes to us from the French name for them, Kristineaux, Arrowsmith's Knistineaux. David Thompson calls them Nahathaways, and Arrowsmith uses that term for the Crees north of the Beaver River. These Indians lived in the desolate woods of

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the north, fishing and hunting but often on the verge of starvation. Their food supply was so short that they never came together in any crowd. They were in this way a great contrast to the prairie Indians, who feasted on buffalo meat in large camps. The Crees were *par excellence* the people of the fur belt, the beaver killers. We shall find them coming down with their beaver skins to Fort George from the "strong woods" of the Beaver River.

There were also prairie Crees, scattered among the Assiniboines upon the wide plains to the south of the Saskatchewan. Arrowsmith places them on the upper waters of the Assiniboine River, but they roamed far to the west.

As M'Gillivray ascended the Saskatchewan, he would have these Crees, and especially the Assiniboines, on the south all the way from Nipawi, on Arrowsmith's map as "Falls", to the Paint (Vermilion) River. The Assiniboines were so-called from two words signifying "he cooks by (using) roasting stones". Hence their other name "Stonies" or as Arrowsmith has it, Stone Indians. They are placed on his map under both names in groups over a wide area. Alexander Henry, the younger, gives them much the same position:—

"The Assiniboines, or Stone Indians, originated from the Sioux or Nadouasis, probably S. of St. Peter's [the Minnesota] River, where some misunderstanding between different bands caused their separation. They are now numerous, and inhabit a vast extent of plains. Their lands may be said to commence at the Hair hills, near Red River, thence running west along the Assiniboine, from that to the junction of the North and South Saskatchewan, and up the former branch to Fort Vermillion; then

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due S. to Battle river, then S.E. to the Missouri, down that river nearly to the Mandane Villages, and finally N.E. to the Hair hills again. All this space of open country may be called the lands of the Assiniboinés. A few straggling Crees occasionally mix among them. . . .

. . . . The principal occupation of these people is making pounded meat and grease, which they barter with us for liquor, tobacco, powder, balls, knives, awls, brass rings, brass wire, blue beads and other trinkets. . . . It is supposed that these people are the most expert and dexterous nation of the plains in constructing pounds and, driving the buffalo into them.”¹

Henry places some of the groups of Assiniboinés which M’Gillivray mentions:—

“The Paddling and Foot Assiniboinés . . . inhabit the lakes of Rivière Qu’Appelle, etc., and thence to the Missouri. . . . Canoe and Paddling Assiniboinés . . . dwell W. of the Paddling and Foot Assiniboinés. . . .

. . . Strong Wood Assiniboinés, on Battle river and between that and the South Branch”².

West of the Assiniboinés were the *Gros Ventres*, or Big Bellies, who figure largely in the Journal. “In this people, another instance occurs of the impropriety with which the Canadian French name the Indians. They call them *gros ventres* or big-bellies; and that without any reason, as they are comely and as well-made as any tribe whatever; and are not very remarkable for their corpulency.” Thus that unimaginative and not keenly perceiving Englishman, Edward Umfreville, who, as we have seen, had spent several years on the Northern Saskatchewan, some distance above the Battle River.

¹ *Journal*, ed. by Coues, p. 516.

² *Journal*, ed. by Coues, p. 522-3.

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The truth is that this odious tribe had its odious name because it was known in the sign language of the Indians by "a sweeping pass with both hands in the front of the abdomen, intended to convey the idea of 'always hungry' i.e., 'beggars' ". Alexander Henry says of them;

"Formerly they inhabited the point of land between the North and South branches of the Saskatchewan to the junction of those streams; from which circumstance, it is supposed, they derive the name of Rapid Indians."

We may add, also, the name of Fall Indians, as they are called in Arrowsmith's map. The reference is to Cole's Falls or Rapids, some twenty-five miles below the present Prince Albert. Others attribute the name to the Nipawi Rapid much farther down the River. Henry adds:—

"They are an audacious, turbulent race, and have repeatedly attempted to massacre us. The first attack was made at old Fort Brulé [M'Gillivray's Pine Island Fort] in 1793, when they pillaged the H.B. Co. fort [Manchester House], and were about to commit a similar outrage upon that of the N.W. Co. but through the spirited conduct of one of the clerks, they were repulsed and fled with the booty acquired from the H.B. Co. establishment."

M'Gillivray's *Journal* makes repeated reference to this incident, and not in a forgiving spirit. The story of the attack has already been told in the words of John MacDonald of Garth. David Thompson says of these Indians:—

"Their Chief was a bad character, and brought them into so many quarrels with their allies they had to leave their country and wander to the right bank of the Missisourie, to near the Mandane villages." *Narrative*, p. 327.

None of this tribe are now to be found in Canada.

¹ *Ibid*, p. 530.

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To the west of the Fall Indians, lay the Blackfeet, whose strength and whose ferocity made even our intrepid adventurers to walk warily. The name Blackfeet was borne either because the tribes painted their moccasins black or because the ashes of their camp fires—possibly buffalo dung fires—blackened their footwear to the point of distinguishing them from their neighbours. The groups which composed the nation were the Blackfeet proper, the Blood Indians and the Piegans. Their geographical position and their worth to the fur-trader, may be gathered from the *Journal of Alexander Henry*.

“The tract of land which they call their own at present begins on a line due south from Fort Vermillion, to the South Branch of the Saskatchewan and up that stream to the foot of the Rocky mountains; then goes N. along the mountains until it strikes the N. Branch of the Saskatchewan, and down that stream to Vermillion river. Painted Feather’s band of Blackfeet are the most eastern; next to them are the Cold Band of Blackfeet; near these again are the Bloods; and the Piegans or Picaneaux dwell along the foot of the mountains.

“... The principal occupation of the Slaves [Henry’s term for the Blackfeet] is war, and like all the other savages, they are excessively cruel to their enemies. I have heard instances that chilled my blood with horror. The country they inhabit abounds with animals of various kinds; beaver are numerous, but they will not hunt them with any spirit, so that their principal produce is dried provisions, buffalo robes, wolves, foxes, and other meadow [*i.e.* prairie] skins and furs of little value. In summer they chase buffalo on horseback, and kill them with bows and arrows, and in winter they take them in pounds. Smallpox has destroyed great

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numbers; however, they are still very numerous, and increasing fast. The following is the present population, as nearly as I could ascertain it.

120	Tents, Painted Feather's band	360	warriors
80	" Cold band.....	160	"
100	" Bloods.....	200	"
350	" Piegans or Piceneaux.....	700	"

650 Tents of Slaves or about..... 1,420 warriors

Painted Feather's band are the most civilized, and well disposed toward us of all the Indians in the plains. The Cold band are notoriously a set of audacious villains. The Bloods are still worse, always inclined to mischief and murder. The Piegans are the most numerous and best disposed to us. They also kill beaver. The other tribes stand in awe of them, and they have frequently offered to quell disturbances made by other tribes." Henry's *Journal*, pp. 523-4; 529-30.

Four Indian tribes receive a bare mention in M'Gillivray's pages—the Slaves, the Sarsi, the Kutenays and the Snakes.

The Slaves were an Athapascan group about the Rocky Mountains and north of the Blackfeet. They were the prey of other tribes who raided them for slaves—hence their name.

The Kutenais, or as M'Gillivray has it, Coutonees, were on the upper streams of the Columbia River.

The Sarsi, or as M'Gillivray and Arrowsmith call them, Circees were another group.

"Their land was formerly on the N. side of the Saskatchewan, but they removed to the S. side and now dwell commonly S. of the Beaver hills, near the [Blackfeet] with whom they are at peace." Alex. Henry's *Journal*, p. 532.

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The Snake Indians once occupied the upper valley of the South Saskatchewan, but were driven across the mountains and southward by the Piegans and their allies, who were able first to equip themselves with guns bought of the traders, and thus become invincible. They were now to the south of the Piegans. They had vast herds of horses.

Speaking of the Indians of the Prairies—the *gens du large* of M’Gillivray’s *Journal*—David Thompson makes an interesting comparison with the tribes of the forest belt.

“These great Plains place them under different circumstances, and give them peculiar traits of character from those that hunt in the forests. These latter live a peaceable life, with hard labor, to procure provisions and clothing for their families. In summer they make use of canoes, and in winter haul on sleds all they have, in their frequent removals from place to place. On the other hand the Indians of the Plains make no use of canoes, frequently stay many days in a place, and when they remove have horses and dogs, both in winter and summer to carry their baggage and provisions: they have no hard labor, but have powerful enemies which keep them constantly on the watch and are never secure but in large camps.” *Narrative*, p. 345-6.

With an ample food supply to hand in the herds of buffalo they gave themselves up from time to time to feasting and dancing, to councils and oratory, and to three types of sport, running buffalo, stealing horses, and war. The fur-traders were well aware of their complete self-dependence and of the happiness of their life.

“The inhabitants of the Plains, [says Duncan M’Gillivray], are so advantageously situated, that

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they could live very happily independent of our assistance. They are surrounded with innumerable herds of various kinds of animals, whose flesh affords them excellent nourishment and whose skins defend them from the inclemency of the weather, and they have invented so many methods for the destruction of animals, that they stand in no need of amunition to provide a sufficiency for their purposes. It is then our luxuries that attract them to the Fort, and make us so necessary to their happiness. The love of Rum is their first inducement to industry; they undergo every hardship and fatigue to procure a Skinful of this delicious beverage, and when a Nation becomes addicted to drinking, it affords a strong presumption that they will become excellent hunters. Tobacco is another article of as great demand as it is unnecessary; Custom has however made it of consequence to them as it constitutes a principal part of their feasts and superstitious ceremonies, and in their treaties of Peace and Councils of War, a few whiffs out of the medicine pipe confirms the articles that have been mutually agreed upon. As for amunition, it is rendered valuable by the great advantages it gives them over their enemies in the expeditions to the Rocky Mountains against the defenceless Slave Indians, who are destitute of this destructive improvement of War. It is also required to kill beaver, but if the Fur Trade had not allured adventurers to this Country there would be no necessity for hunting this animal. The rest of our commodities are indeed useful to the Natives, when they can afford to purchase them, but if they had hitherto lived unacquainted with European productions it would not, I believe, diminish their felicity." P. 47.

It is true that the Indians made soft and warm garments out of deer skin, but though these were very fine for dry weather, when soaked with rain they were

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cold and uncomfortable. Hence the demand for strouds and blankets to be worn next the skin.

But rum was the cornerstone on which the fortunes of the fur magnates were built. The traders themselves often fell victims to its allurements, and it played a considerable part in the festivities of the lonely post. New Year's Day and, of course, St. Andrew's Day were celebrated according to Scottish traditions, not only by the wintering partners and clerks of a Company essentially Scottish in its *personale* but by the French Canadian voyageurs and the Indian hangers on. Here is the account of the celebration of St. Andrew's Day at Fort George, on the Saskatchewan, 1794.

“30th. Nov. This being St. Andrew's Day the men observed the usual ceremony of presenting *Bouquets* to his Votaries, on which occasion Mr. Shaw gave them 6 gallons Rum to divert themselves, which they did with a Vengeance, for one bottle succeeded another so quick that scarcely a man in the Fort escaped a Black eye.”

The part played by rum in the ceremonial reception of the Indians and in the trade meets one in almost every page of the *Journal*. Our twentieth century mind, impressed as it is with the obligation of the White races to Natives, and the social demoralization which follows the unrestricted sale of alcohol among our subject peoples, grows uncomfortable at the scenes of drunkenness, violence and debauchery, gross and unashamed, amidst which our fellow Canadians gave the Indians of the prairies their first contact with modern civilization. The contrasts between these scenes and the Christianity which they outwardly represented strikes one now and yet again as one turns the pages of the *Journal*. The North-westerners who moved calmly amid these gross scenes on the

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lordly Saskatchewan maintained two official pews in St. Gabriel Street Church, Montreal (Presbyterian). The Church had been built in 1792, *i.e.*, but two years before, and the fur trade magnates of the Northwest Company figure largely in the subscription list for the building.

"Alex. Henry	Twenty Pounds
Joseph Frobisher	Ten Guineas
John Gregory	Ten Guineas
Alex. McKenzie	Five Guineas
Peter Pangman	Five Guineas
William McGillivray	Five Guineas
Angus Shaw	Three Guineas
Rodk. McKenzie	Three Guineas."

But we must remember that the public points its finger to-day at contrasts which passed unseen 150 years ago, and we must not impose upon the first Whites on the prairies the conscience of the last. Indeed the contrast would not have been mentioned here but that the fur-traders themselves were not wholly unconscious of it for they sought to forestall criticism by what we might call their philosophy of rum—Rum, the first incentive to industry and civilization among the Indians. A considerable portion of that elaborate defence of the North West Company, seeking a Charter from the Government, *On the Origin and Progress of the North West Company*, is given to showing that the more the Company secured the monopoly of the trade the less had been the consumption of rum. "It is the interest of the Company," the plea runs, to "maintain peace and sobriety among the Indians and induce them to devote their attention entirely to the

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chase." Such rum as is sold is no more than a stimulus to industry, as M'Gillivray puts it:

"The love of rum is their first inducement to industry. . . when a nation becomes addicted to drinking, it affords a strong presumption that they will become excellent hunters."

This picture of the benign fur-traders is further elaborated in the pamphlet. The adventurers do not really go to the Indian as traders but as friends and the representatives of His Majesty.

"By identifying themselves with His Majesty's Government they acquire increased importance among the Indians. They represent their visits and residence in the Indian Territory as boons to the Indians from His Majesty, bestowed on account of their good behaviour and to be withdrawn should they exhibit the reverse. . . . The Indian hunts and through friendship and in the spirit of generosity, he brings his furs to the trader; the trader he regards as the representative of His Majesty, through whose friendship and good will manufactures are permitted to be bought, and to be presented to him in return. Here, therefore, are less the cold relations of trade, than. . . . the warm ones of national and individual attachment." (pp. 16-17.)

This generous picture is scarcely what the reader will find in the pages of Duncan M'Gillivray, or in the history of the trade on the Saskatchewan. It was, of course, intended for the London public, for men of an evangelical turn of mind and for your staunch imperialists, to camouflage for them the operations of exceedingly shrewd merchants.

There were two great advantages in rum as an article of merchandise. It was wanted by the Indians, and it could be carried in small bulk. The trader took with

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him in his frail canoe small kegs of alcohol in very concentrated form, "high wines", as it was called. When trading began he watered it down so as to have large bulk and great value for the small quantum he had brought. There were three grades of rum. What was sold at Fort George was known as "Blackfoot rum". Alex. Henry says it was the weakest of all.

"We do not mix our liquor so strong as we do for tribes who are more accustomed to use it. To make a nine-gallon keg of liquor we generally put in four or five quarts of high wine and then fill up with water. For the Crees and Assiniboines we put in six quarts of high wine, and for the Saulteurs eight or nine quarts."—*Journal*, p. 542.

Next to rum and tobacco the demand of the *gens du large*, as M'Gillivray calls them, was for guns,—not to shoot buffalo, for they preferred the old way of stalking game with bows and arrows or of driving a portion of a herd into a pound, but for war.

Of all the gifts of the European to the Indians of the Plains the most revolutionary were the horse and the gun. Before the horse reached them the range of the tribe was limited by the mobility of the foot-passenger. With the horse, the expansive prairie ceased to separate tribe from tribe. It rather became a highway by which a whole tribe could strike a distant foe as swiftly and suddenly as a bolt from the blue. No passage in all the literature of the North West is more thrilling than the story the old Indian chief told David Thompson of the coming of the horse and the gun¹. The horse was first in the possession of the Snake Indians to the south, introduced, doubtless, along the prairies at the foot of the Rockies from the Spaniards in Mexico about the time when the gun was beginning to be known to the Plain Crees and

¹ *Narrative*, chap. 22.

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Assiniboinés, who must have got them from Hudson Bay or perhaps from La Vérendrye, for it seems to have been the second quarter of the eighteenth century. The Piegans lay between the Snakes and the Crees, with neither horse nor gun. The Snakes were carrying everything before them in their wars with the Piegans. The strange creature which they used to carry their tents, and to ride to battle gave them a mobility which could not be checkmated, and the stroke of the charge was more than Piegan infantry could stand against.

“Our enemies, the Snake Indians and their allies had Misstutim (Big Dogs, that is horses) on which they rode, swift as the Deer, on which they dashed at the Peeagans, and with their stone Pukamoggan knocked them on the head and they had lost several of their best men.”

At this point the Piegans called in their allies, the Plain Crees and Assiniboinés who had guns,—ten guns and about thirty balls,—to help them. “We were considered the strength of the battle.”

Finally the hostile tribes met on “a wide plain”.

“The War Chief was close to us, anxious to see the effect of our guns, The lines were too far asunder for us to make a sure shot, and we requested him to close the line to about 60 yards, which was gradually done, and lying flat on the ground behind the shields, we watched our opportunity when they drew their bows to shoot at us, their bodies were then exposed and each of us, as opportunity offered, fired with deadly aim, and either killed or severely wounded, every one we aimed at.

The War Chief was highly pleased, and the Snake Indians finding so many killed & wounded kept themselves behind their shields, The War Chief then desired we would spread ourselves by two's

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throughout the line, which we did and our shots caused consternation and dismay along their whole line. The battle had begun about Noon, and the Sun was not yet half down, when we perceived some of them had crawled away from their shields and were taking to flight. The War Chief seeing this went along the line and spoke to every chief to keep his Men ready for a charge of the whole line of the enemy, of which he would give the signal; this was done by himself stepping in front with his spear and calling on them to follow him as he rushed on the line, and in an instant the whole of us followed him, the greater part of the enemy took to flight. . . . At the body of every Snake Indian killed, there were five or six of us trying to get his scalp or part of his clothing, his weapons or something as a trophy of battle. As there were only three of us [Crees] and seven of our friends the Stone Indians we did not interfere and got nothing."

Next morning the tribe celebrated the victory.

"We [the men with guns] did not paint our faces until the War Chief told us to paint our foreheads and eyes black, and the rest of the face dark red ochre, as having carried guns, and to distinguish us from all the rest. Those who had scalps now came forward with the scalps neatly stretched on a round willow with a handle to the frame; they appeared to be more than fifty, and excited loud shouts and the war whoop of victory. When this was over the War Chief told them that if any one had a right to a scalp of an enemy as a war trophy it ought to be us, who with our guns had gained the victory, when from the numbers of our enemies we were anxious to leave the field of battle; and that ten scalps must be given to us; this was soon collected, and he gave to each of us a Scalp.

After all the war ceremonies were over. . . . we were anxious to see a horse of which we had heard

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so much. At last as the leaves were falling, we heard that one was killed by an arrow shot in the belly, but the Snake Indian that rode him got away; numbers of us went to see him, he put us in mind of a Stag that had lost his horns; and we did not know what name to give him. But as he was a slave to man, like the dog, which carried our things, he was named the Big Dog."

Space forbids our continuing the old chief's story of how the Piegans stole their first horses from the Snakes, fascinating as it is. When Duncan M'Gillivray wrote, horses were plentiful among all the tribes. Alexander Henry mentions one Piegan who had three hundred. They were, as we have already said, of two kinds,—“best horses”, mostly stallions, of tried swiftness and endurance for war and running buffalo—and common horses,—and were an ordinary object of trade. A common horse could be bought on the Saskatchewan for “a gallon keg of Blackfoot rum, 2 fathoms of new twist tobacco, 20 balls and powder enough for them, 1 awl, 1 scalper, 1 falcher, 1 worm, 1 P.C. glass, 1 steel and 1 flint”. (Henry's *Journal* p. 542). The pleasure of horse-stealing, keen in itself, must have been greatly enhanced by the chance of getting this large and varied assortment of goods and the rum in return for the stolen beast.

The sport of horse-stealing brought constant friction between tribe and tribe, and between the Indians and the fur-traders. The *boissons* or drinking bouts at the forts were always scenes of strife, and it must have called for much firmness and mastery to prevent the frays from including the men of the post and even the wintering partners themselves. But the standing danger was the traffic in arms and ammunition, for the supremacy of the tribes neighbour to the Forts was maintained by keeping

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arms from passing through to the more distant peoples. When David Thompson crossed the Rockies to trade with the Kutenays, his own friends the Piegans came very near massacring him and his men to prevent them from arming their ancient foe. Nothing but his firmness in fortifying his post saved his life. The Whites on the Saskatchewan must have appeared to the Indians on the distant plains as far as the Missouri as the allies of the Crees, the Assiniboines and the Blackfeet supplying them with arms, and thus must have been in constant danger of being drawn in spite of themselves into the wars. Any successful raid of a hostile tribe might penetrate to a Fort, slaughter its inmates and carry off its munitions in triumph. This explains that curious mixture of trust and fear of the Indians which meets us in the pages of Duncan M'Gillivray.

Those were brave men and masterly who faced these perils, maintained their supremacy over swarms of savages, sober and drunk, and returned safely, bringing their rich harvest of pemican and furs with them.

* M. S. JOURNAL OF
THE LATE DUNCAN M'GILLIVRAY ESQUIRE

* For John Henry Esqr.
from his Friend
W. M'Gillivray

* These superscriptions are in the hand-writing of William M'Gillivray.
The Journal itself appears to be the original from the hand of
Duncan M'Gillivray.



GRAND PORTAGE, 21ST JULY 1794

Crossed the Portage Mr. Shaw Mr. McDonald, my Brother and myself.¹ Our men being already prepared waited our arrival with impatience, as they wished to renew once more the toils of the Voyage; but the day being far advanced we could not proceed to business that night; An Express was however sent off to Mr. Gregory² for Powder as it was luckily discovered that the quantity required for our Canoes was difficient.

July 22d.—The Athabaska Gentlemen (Messrs. McKenzie³ G. McLeod) Embarked in the morning in a light Canoe for Lac de la Pluie⁴ where they expected to find their men and Canoes from their Wintering Ground, on

¹ Mr. Angus Shaw, proprietor or wintering partner in charge of the Department of Upper Forts des Prairies, headquarters at Fort George, on the Northern Saskatchewan; Mr. John MacDonald of Garth and Duncan M'Gillivray ("myself"), Clerks under Mr. Shaw; the "brother" is Wm. M'Gillivray, wintering partner in the English (Churchill) River Department.

Strictly a portage was a streak of ground over which the *canoes* were carried; a *décharge* was one where the freight was discharged and carried, the canoe being floated. Here the Montreal canoes came to the depot "Grand Portage" and the freight was carried over the Grand Portage to lighter canoes waiting at Fort Charlotte at the other end, on the Pigeon River. See p. xlv.

² Mr. John Gregory, formerly of Gregory, McLeod & Co. (See p. xxxviii) an agent of the N.W.Co. The agents would leave Montreal towards the end of May, spend the last weeks of July and the first weeks of August at Grand Portage, receiving the furs as they came "out" from "the interior", going over the accounts of the wintering partners, determining the quantity and nature of the new "outfits" and despatching them. Something like a council of the agents and wintering partners, held during these weeks, determined the policy of the Company and the *personale* of the several departments.

³ Mr. Roderick Mackenzie, the cousin of Alexander Mackenzie, the great explorer. Alexander Mackenzie was at Grand Portage during this rendezvous, having crossed the Rockies to the Pacific and being now on his way to Montreal.

⁴ The Rainy Lake of to-day.

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their arrival.— Mr. Thomson¹ sent off his Canoes, he himself intending to follow them in a few days thereafter; and our Canoes being 16 in number including 1 for South Branch² set off in the afternoon loaded with 25 Pieces & 8 Bags Corn each, after which, Mr. Shaw and my Brother returned to the other end, the former intending to remain there 6 days longer & then to pursue Mr. McD. and myself in a light Canoe.— Tho' last Year 19 Canoes were thought necessary to maintain the trade of Upper Forts des Prairies³ yet Mr. Shaw believed 16 including his own sufficient for the year especially as Pine Island Fort⁴ was demolished last Spring, and little likelihood of establishing any other Post to replace it, and the unsettled state in which we left the natives last spring⁵ threatening a considerable reduction of the Returns, it was very probable that so much goods would not be required. David Grant⁶ was preparing to sett off a few days after us & it was reported that a good proportion of his Canoes was destined for Ft. George and the lower Posts of the River Opas.⁷ 23d.—Overtook the Canoes

¹ John Thomson, in the English River Department; from 1789 to 1794, he was in the Rat River country, N.E. of Cumberland House, east of the present Flin-Flon mine.

² Of the Saskatchewan River, on which there was a fort called "South Branch".

³ Fort des Prairies was less a name than a descriptive title given in succession to a number of forts on the Saskatchewan; they were near or in the prairie region. For a fort of that name visited by Alexander Henry, the elder, and below the Forks of the Saskatchewan, see p. xxx; at present the title is being given to Fort George and Pine Island Fort. The Lower Department would include the post being opened up at the mouth of the Sturgeon River (see p. l) and the fort on the South Branch.

⁴ Also called Fort de l'Isle, see p. xli.

⁵ Duncan M'Gillivray was, therefore, in the Upper Forts des Prairies Department in the winter of 1793-4, at first at Fort George, p. 27, then at Pine Island Fort. See p. 32.

⁶ A "free trader"; see p. li; pp. 48, 54, 59.

⁷ From the Assiniboine word Opah (made French as Au Pas) "Red Deer". The name was usually applied to the Saskatchewan below the Forks, but the Crees called the South Saskatchewan Wawaskesew-seeppee, also meaning Red Deer River.

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at the Carribou¹ and proceeded together to the Outard² where we camped.— 24th.—All the small Canoes of the Band were wind bound at the Orignal,³ they being so overloaded that the Gunwales were scarcely 5 inches above Water, & tho' the Lake was not above 2 leagues long yet we were retarded all day.— 25th.—Sett off early in the morning and before night crossed the *Grand Portage Neuve*⁴ where we gave the men a dram.— 28th.—Overtook Mr. Thomsons Canoes at the *Rocher des Couteaux*⁵ from whence we proceeded together and camped below the Rapids. 29th.—Mr. Ts. Canoes set off a head to avoid the confusion of intermixing the Pieces, and he himself overtook us about noon at *Gros de Bois blanc*⁶, where a violent storm of thunder lightening and rain obliged us to camp to preserve the Goods dry.— 31st.—Camped in Lac la Croix⁷ about 2 O'clock P.M., there being no necessity for marching⁸ more expeditiously as we had orders to attend Mr. Shaw whom according to Mr. Ts. accounts, we expected in a few days. The men began to be alarmed on account of their Canoes, we have hitherto only found one purposely made for Mr. S. which we therefore left for him & the old Canoes are so extreemly bad that many of them cannot proceed much farther, they are so completely soaked by being continually in the Water, that they are scarcely

¹ Otherwise Carreboeuf or Deer Portage. Each portage had its name.

² Literally Bustard Portage, from the name given by the voyageurs to the wild goose ; the portage led to the lake of the same name, now called Goose Lake or Fowl Lake.

³ This portage led to the lake of the same name, now Moose Lake, the English equivalent.

⁴ The chief portage between the present Watab and Rose Lakes.

⁵ As the name suggests, this portage led to Knife Lake.

⁶ The "Great Whitewood carrying place" of Thompson; it led to White-wood or Basswood Lake.

⁷ Still so called ; known also by the English equivalent, Cross Lake.

⁸ The term is used of travelling by canoe.

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Portable and withal so leaky that they require gumming at every *Portage*.— 2nd August.—We had the satisfaction of finding 9 Canoes in Lake Siginigan¹, and after our foreman had chosen one for himself, the Men cast lots for the rest to avoid jealousy and confusion. Whilst we were arranging these Canoes Mr. Shaw arrived; he left the English River & some of the Red River Canoes² on their way to their respective Wintering Grounds, and the opposition were to have left the G: P:³ in the afternoon of the day on which he departed.— 3rd.—A strong contrary wind obliged us to put ashore on an Island in Lac de la Pluie, where the *Mangeurs de Lard*⁴ from the Fort passed us under Sail & next morning we arrived there about 10 O'clock.— We found the Gentn. busily employed in equipping the men; we were rather surprized to see their preparations for departure so little advanced, but we soon understood that it was owing to an incident no less dissagreeable in itself than prejudicial to the Concern had it succeeded. A few discontented persons in their Band, wishing to do as much mischief as possible assembled their companions together several times on the Voyage Outward & represented to them how much their Interest suffered by the passive obedience to the will of their masters, when their utility to the Company, might insure them not only of better treatment, but of any other

¹ M'Gillivray has already passed a lake of this name; probably Alexander Mackenzie's L. Micane, Thompson's Lake Le Mekan, Arrowsmith's L. Micaine, now Nameukan, is intended.

² The river on which the city of Winnipeg now stands along with the rivers Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle made the Red River Department. Its traders crossed the prairies to the Mandans and other tribes in the valley of the Missouri.

³ Grand Portage.

⁴ The crews of the canoes from Montreal were sometimes fed with pork; hence the description, "Pork-eaters". A detachment of the Montreal men brought the goods for Athabasca, the farthestmost of the departments, to Rainy Lake to meet the Athabasca canoes, thus enabling them to reach their stations as far as the Peace River before the rivers froze. They are now returning to Grand Portage.

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conditions which they would prescribe with Spirit & Resolution.— The Canadians¹ always fond of novelty and change listened with pleasure to these dangerous discourses, which flattered them with a great superiority over the rest of their countrymen in the N:W.; they therefore suffered themselves to be led away from their duty by a few rascals who had more in view to give trouble to their Masters than to gain any real advantage to themselves.— Things were in this state when they arrived at L:L:P:² where they all declared with one voice that unless their wages would be augmented, and several other conditions equally unreasonable granted them they would immediately sett off to Montreal.— These resolutions having been determined upon some time before this period their minds began to cool from the first transports of expectation which this Plan occasioned and of course they began to reflect on the consequence, that would attend a step, the failure of which would ruin their characters for ever in their own Country, where they could not expect to find a favorable reception after having broken their engagements and disoblged their Employers:— Their minds were agitated with these scruples at the very time that they insisted on a compliance with their demands, and tho' they endeavoured carefully to conceal it, yet a timidity was observed in their behaviour which proved very fortunate for their Masters, who took such good advantage of it, that before night they prevailed on a few of the most timid to return to their duty, and the rest, being only ashamed to abandon their companions, soon followed the example.— A few of the most resolute were obstinate enough to hold out

¹ Here, as always, at this time, French Canadians.

² Lac la Pluie, Rainy Lake—the name of the N. W. Co.'s post. It was really on the Rainy River, on the north bank, half a mile below the Falls, at the present Fort Frances.

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still, indeed they were too far engaged to retract and it was necessary to punish them, being the ringleaders, as an example to the rest; they were therefore sent down to Montreal in disgrace.

6th Augt.—Set off about noon in company with Mr. Thon. whose canoes were a head: The Athabasca people intended to follow us next day.— 10th.—Arrived at the English House at *Portage de l'Isle*¹ and paid a visit to Mr. McKay² who has been starving for some time past, notwithstanding his having boasted last spring that he had a sufficient quantity of Flour and *Salt Beef* to maintain him till the Fall.— We have had very disagreeable weather since we left L:L: Pluie, insomuch that scarcely a day passes without producing violent storms of thunder lightening & rain, so that we are up to the knees in mud in most of the carrying places.— 12th.—Entered the Rivierre Blanche,³ which (I believe) derives its name from the variety and number of its Waterfalls, by which it is so much agitated that it is generally covered by a *white* froth; in other respects it is only a continuation of River Unniquie, of which it forms a space of 7 leagues and afterwards loses its name. The Navigation of River Unniquie is interrupted by 37 Portages of various lengths; it contains a vast body of water which runs

¹ M'Gillivray leaves three days unrecorded. He is now on the River Winnipeg at the entrance into it of the English River (to be distinguished from the Churchill River so called), from the east, "down which the English come from Hudson's Bay", (Thompson), *i.e.*, from the Albany River and Factory. Arrow-smith's map shows Lakes Sal and St. Joseph on this route. It was natural for the Hudson's Bay Company to have a house near this meeting of the ways. Portage de l'Isle was about four miles further down.

² Mr. John Macdonell of the Red River Department, whom M'Gillivray is soon to overtake, mentions meeting a party of traders from Hudson's Bay, no doubt by way of the Albany River and the English River, who were for the first time on the Winnipeg River that year, 1793; their chief was Donald McKay, whom he calls McKay, le Malin, the Mad. (*Journal from Lachine to the Qu'Appelle*, August 27 and 29.)

³ Alexander Mackenzie says there are "seven portages in so short a space that the whole are discernible at the same moment".

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along with great velocity, between two barren rocky Shores, bounded by thick impenetrable woods & discharges itself after a short course in Lake Unniquie.—The River of *Lake La Pluie* forms a fine contrast with the one abovementioned; it is reckoned the most beautiful River in the North, a preference which it richly deserves, from the variety of delightful scenes which its banks disclose at every winding.

At the second *Portage de la Riviere Blanche*, one of the Canoes imprudently advanced too near the Fall to unload, the most convenient landing place being already occupied by the other canoes, and after the Goods were debarked, the Upper end of it thro' some negligence was suddenly carried out by the current with the steersman suspended after it, and the foreman attempting to retain his end was also carried away before he could receive any assistance:— they were hurled down with surprizing velocity thro' three successive cascades, nothing but the particular direction of Providence could have saved them in such imminent danger—for the Canoe was several times overwhelmed with water, & threatened every moment with being dashed to pieces in the windings of the Rocks, and after arriving in the dreadful whirlpool below, it remained a considerable time under water.— At length however the Current drove it towards shore, with the men still hanging after it, and tho' they at first seemed insensible yet after a little assistance they recovered their strength, & before night renewed their labours, with as much alacrity as if nothing had happened them, a convincing proof of the force of their constitutions. About 3 O'clock P.M. a Roll of Tobacco fell into the water & F Lussier dived to the bottom to recover it.— Augt. 14th—We found some Indians camped at Lac de Bonnet¹

¹ Bonnet Lake.

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with whom we traded some fresh Sturgeon & dried Moose Deer Meat, for Rum, amunition & Tobacco and next day arrived at the Fort near the bottom of the River¹ where we found Messrs Shaw & Thomson, they having gone a-head 2 days before.— We have for some days past been in continual expectation of the Athabaska people, but as they have not hitherto overtaken us, it is apprehended that a second rupture has retarded their departure from L.L.P. Mr. S. is therefore determined to wait their arrival here.— 16th—Early this morning the Athabaska Canoes arrived without any accident and shortly thereafter Mr. McDonnell² with 10 Canoes for the Red River, and Mr. Harrison³ with 3 for Fort Dauphin arrived. At 10 O'clock all the Canoes being about 60 went off to choose a convenient place to dry the Goods, which the late rains have entirely soaked through.— Towards night the Fort D.P. & Athabaska Canoes departed with orders to camp at the entrance of the Lake, the light Canoes intending to pass the night at the Fort.

17th Augt. We left the Fort at 1 O'clock in the morning with a fair wind, which continued with little intermission till midnight, when we camped without having overtaken the loaded Canoes according to our expectation and next morning we sett off at day break, with a favorable breeze being anxious about them.— At 4 O'clock P.M. we perceived the Canoes under Sail in the Horizon & at 11 we arrived at their camp. in the

¹ Known to the voyageurs as Bas de la Rivière, to the North-westerners as Fort Alexander or "The Depot", *i.e.*, for pemmican from the Red River to provision the brigades going out to Grand Portage or going into the Interior across Lake Winnipeg. La Vérendrye's Second Fort Maurepas was a little further down the river and on the north side.

² John McDonell.

³ Edward Harrison, a clerk of the N.W. Co.; Fort Dauphin was at the south end of Lake Dauphin. The Department of that name included Swan River and the upper Assiniboine.

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Islands of St. Martin supposed to be the Centre of the lake. It is surprizing what extraordinary exertions the people have made for 2 days past to decide a contest that had arisen between them on the night of their departure: The Athabasca Men piqued themselves on a Superiority they were supposed to have over the other bands of the North for expeditious marching, and ridiculed our men *a la facon du Nord* for pretending to dispute a point that universally decided in *their* favor. Our people were well aware of the disadvantages they laboured under (being about $\frac{1}{4}$ Heavier loaded than their opponents) but they could not swallow the haughtiness and contempt with which they thought themselves treated, and tho' they could flatter themselves with no hopes of success from the event yet they resolved to dispute the Victory, with the greatest obstinacy that their opposers might not obtain it without the sweat of their brows. In consequence of this determination the two Bands instead of camping according to orders, entered the Lake at sun-set, the one animated with the expectation of victory, and the other resolved, if possible, not to be vanquished. They pursued the Voyage with unremitting efforts without any considerable advantage on either side for 48 hours during which they did not once put ashore, 'till at length, being entirely overcome with labour and fatigue, they mutually agreed to camp where we found them, and cross the rest of the Lake together.— Tho' this dispute will perhaps appear trifling to you, yet to shew you how much it interested the Parties concerned it will only be necessary to mention a circumstance, which clearly proves their emulation but will do no honor to their humanity. On the second night of the Contest one of our steersmen being overpowered with sleep fell out of the

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Stern of his Canoe which being under sail advanced a considerable distance before the people could recover from the confusion that this accident occasioned; in the mean time the poor fellow almost sinking with the weight of his cloathes cried out to 2 Canoes that happened to pass within a few yards of him to save his life *pour l'amour de dieu*; but neither the love of God or of the blessed Virgin, whom he powerfully called to his assistance, had the least influence on his hard hearted Countrymen who paddled along with the greatest unconcern, and he must have certainly perished if his own Canoe had not returned time enough to prevent it.— Augt. 23rd.—Arrived at the Grand Rapid¹ after having crossed the Lake in 6 days, being as quick a passage as ever was performed by loaded Canoes in the Fall when westerly winds generally prevail in this quarter. August 24th.—Arrived at the entrance of Lake Bourbon² at noon where we found my Brothers *relations*³, with whom we traded some provisions and paid them some credits since last spring. The Athabaska Canoes went a head to avoid the confusion that too many Canoes together would occasion in the River Opas and we remained behind on purpose to give them a small advance. Indians drinking all night.— 25th.—Mr. Shaw left us to pursue the Canoes a head, he intended to wait our arrival at Cumberland House⁴ where we expected to find accounts from Fort George.—

¹Two miles before the Saskatchewan River flows into Lake Winnipeg, it runs down 43 feet in about three miles. Arrowsmith's map indicates it as "Carry 3¼ miles".

²The French name, "called by the English, after the Indians, Cedar Lake". Alex. Henry, the elder.

³Adoption by the Chief would make all his people Wm. M'Gillivray's relations. For Duncan M'Gillivray's adoption, see p.73.

⁴The North West post, built in 1793, was beside the H. B. Co's post of that time, one mile west of Hearne's house of 1774. It was near the meeting of the waterways to the North-West and to the West, on Pine Island Lake, on the island which separated the lake from the River Saskatchewan. It was often called "The Depot" because the pemmican from the Forts des Prairies was deposited here for the Northern brigades.

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27th.—Dried a few Bales in the morning.— At 4 O'clock P.M., found 8 Lodges of *Seauteurs*¹ at the *Pas*² in the midst of a drinking match; they behaved exceedingly well tho' their minds were irritated after a quarrel in which 2 men were stabbed, one of whom was already dead and the other mortally wounded.— We traded a little dried meat for Rum and camped near a league further up to avoid their importunities in the night & Mr. McDonald and myself watched to prevent their attempting to steal any pieces, a Trade at which they are very dextrous especially when drunk.

August 29th.—Arrived at Cumberland House where we found all in good health. The Athabaska Gentlemen are still here having sent of their loaded Canoes in the morning.— Mr. Shaw received a letter from Chastallain³ containing very alarming accounts from above.—it appears that the *Gros Ventres*⁴ have made a desperate attack on the Forts at South Branch⁵ on the 24th of July last, and we are sorry to learn that they have been but too successfull, so far as regards the Interests of the H.B. Company. It luckily happened for the preservation of our people that Jacques Raphael an interpreter had gone out a riding in the morning, and after ascending the side of a hill to view the Country arround he found himself on the summit fronting the enemy at the distance of a few yards coming in an opposite dirrection.— The Savages instantly gave the War hoop by which he discovered

¹ Saulteurs, Ojibways; see p. lxiii.

² An ancient resort of Indians at the junction of the Pasquia and Saskatchewan Rivers. Here the La Vérendrye sons built a fort in 1748, and in this neighbourhood the Saskatchewan brigade of the North West Company used to cache the pemmican for the northern brigades before their Cumberland House was built in 1793. The name Le Pas may have arisen from the French name for the River Saskatchewan, Au Pas and L'Opas, Assiniboine Opah, Red Deer.

³ Louis Châtelain.

⁴ Also known as Rapid and as Fall Indians. See p. lxxv.

⁵ South Branch of the Saskatchewan; the site is indicated on Arrowsmith's map. For the cause of the attack see p. 62-64.

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their hostile intentions and being well mounted he immediately turned about and rode full speed to the Fort pursued closely by 5 or 6 *Cavaliers* who instead of entering with him amused themselves with taking a few Horses without the Piquets; whilst he gave the alarm and bolted the Gates. The Men got quickly under arms and stationed themselves in the Block Houses before the arrival of the Savages who advanced boldly up to the Fort as if they derived confidence from the Success that attended their attempt on Pine Island¹ last Winter, or wished to intimidate the People within by a shew of intrepidity which they did not possess; for the first discharge from the Fort discouraged them so much that they retired in confusion behind a rising ground, that effectually covered them from the Shot of the Beseiged. From this situation they kept up a continual fire upon the Fort for half an hour, when their ammunition began to be exhausted, and their War Chief L'Homme de Callumet a brave and undaunted Indian disparing of success from the mode of attack, which did not agree with his fiery nature, advanced a second time towards the Gates encouraging his Warriors to follow him; but he was interrupted in the midst of his harrangue by a Shot from the Before mentioned interpreter which Streched him breathless on the ground, and the miscreants after recovering his body, retreated with mournfull lamentations for loss of their leader and threatening vengeance against the authors of his death.— Thus a band of 100 Chosen Men animated by the love of plunder and a desire of revenge for a former injury, suffered themselves to be repulsed by 4 Canadians and 5 Cree Indians, when a little perseverance without exposing themselves to any danger,

¹ The attempt on Fort de l'Isle is described by John MacDonald of Garth in his *Autobiographical Notes*. See p. xlix.

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might have put the Fort in their possession either thro' famine or want of Water.— But they succeeded better in their attempts upon our neighbours the English two of whom unfortunately went out that morning to search for their Horses in company with a Cree, who perceived the Warriors at a distance & suspecting them to be enemies, he earnestly recommended returning to the Fort to avoid the danger which threatened them: but finding they were deaf to his entreaties, he saved himself into the woods, whilst they mistaking the G.V. for Assiniboines advanced to meet them without the least apprehension of danger 'till at length they were surrounded and fell the victims of their own incredulity.— This melancholy circumstance reduced the Fort to 2 Men (one of whom was Mr. Vandriel) who seeing it impossible to defend themselves barricaded the Gates & abandoning themselves to their destiny, they took refuge in their hiding places which afforded them but little protection. The Savages finding no resistance (for little would be necessary to repel them after their late defeat) broke into the Fort and began a Scene full of horror and destruction. After they became masters of the booty which amounted to 60 or 70 Ps¹; they made a deligent search for the unfortunate people; Butchered every soul that came in their way in a most inhuman manner; even the Women and children did not escape the merciless cruelty of the miscreants who destroyed every age and sex with the most indiscriminating fury that can actuate the mind of a savage.— They afterwards set fire to and demolished the Fort.— Mr. Vandriel was the only person that escaped the general carnage:—he was lucky enough to secure himself amongst a heap of rubbish which was overlooked

¹ The goods were packed in *pieces* of about 90 lbs. each for convenience in loading the canoes and in the carriage across the portages.

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by the Barbarians, but at length being almost surrounded by the flames, he was compelled to abandon his assylum and rushing out through the Fire the Smoke favored his escape to the River Side, where he threw himself into a small Canoe and committed it to the mercy of the Current which soon carried him out of danger.— The Booty which this daring Tribe have acquired from the H.B. Company this year amounts to upwards of 100 Pieces of very valuable goods, besides the loss of 3 men and 5 or 6 women & children who were killed in this unfortunate affair'.— Mr. Chastillain thinking it imprudent to remain any longer at S.B. embarked for Nepawi at the end of two days with the greatest part of the baggage, leaving the rest behind *en cache*,

We find that Mr. Tomison² has waited our arrival at Cumberland House³ these 10 days past, to protect him through the enemies Country in his passage to Fort George, as it is conjectured from their threats at S:B: that they intend intercepting the Canoes along the River.— The English are so apprehensive of being attacked and so sensibly affected by their late losses that they would certainly remain here if an opportunity did not offer to proceed in Company with us; indeed the present appearance of things forbodes a very dissagreeable & dangerous voyage, but the object we have in view of relieving the people at Fort George is of such importance, that the

¹ "The easy conquest of valuable booty obtained at Manchester House induced a vast number of the same tribes to attack the South Branch on the 24th of June last, where they killed Magnus Annel, Hugh Brough and Wm. Fea, plundered and set fire to the house and carried off in triumph the scalps of the unfortunate sufferers. Mr. Vanderial escaped their fury by concealing himself in an old vault, and afterwards directed his way to Cumberland. It is much to be feared that Buckingham House ere this has shared the same fate." Joseph Colen in charge of York Factory to the Governor of the H. B. Co. (quoted by J. B. Tyrrell in T.R.S.C., 1913, Sect. 2 p. 117ff.)

² Mr. William Tomison had served the H. B. Co. for many years as "chief inland" and chief on the Saskatchewan. He had built Lower Hudson's House, Manchester House, and latterly Buckingham House, alongside of the N. W. Co.'s post, Fort George.

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Idea of danger vanishes in the accomplishment of it: We are therefore resolved to pursue the remainder of the Voyage with vigour and resolution and take every precaution to prevent being surprized, and if they venture to attack us openly they will certainly meet with a warm reception.— Mr. Tomison has only 9 Canoes this year whereas last year he had 16 for Upper Fort des Prairies; this diminution of his number is owing to the expedition which *they* carry on in the Rat River¹ this Fall.

August 31st.—Yesterday morning the Athabaska Gentn. went off with very anxious thoughts respecting our safety. The men Were employed arranging their Canoes during the Greatest part of the day and this morning we left C.H.—with a favorable breeze that drove us against the Current at a fine rate.— The English delay their departure 'till tomorrow in expectation of overtaking us before our arrival at Nepawi.— Sept. 2nd.—We were agreeably surprized at meeting 3 men in a small Canoe from Fort George, where they left all in good health—a circumstance that affords us infinite satisfaction and relieves us of many apprehensions respecting their safety of which we had hitherto been ignorant. Mr. Finlay² who remained inland last spring is unacquainted with the Present situation of the *Gros Ventres*, but earnestly recommends us to beware of them along the River, where he supposes them to be in ambush.— About noon arrived at the Barren Hills where we were informed some Birch could be found. The Men therefore put

¹ Rat River runs into the Sturgeon Weir River near its entrance into Sturgeon or Namew Lake. It drains Goose Lake N.E. from Cumberland House. In 1789-90 that region had been the wintering ground of Wm. M'Gillivray and John Thomson. For the success of this policy of the H. B. Co., see Alex. Mackenzie's *Voyages*, p. lxxvi.

² James Finlay, son of the James Finlay who was the first of the English from Montreal to reach the Saskatchewan. He had been in charge of Pine Island Fort when the *Gros Ventres* made their attempt upon it the previous November.

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ashore to raise a few fathoms of bark¹ of which we had great need, and next morning mounted the Grand Rapid² by the line without any accident:— Towards noon, passed Mr. Thorburns ancient Fort, which has been destroyed by fire last Winter.— At 4 O'clock arrived at a Camp of Seauteaux consisting of 7 Lodges from whom we received a few pieces of dried meat and paid them about 200 Skins Credits which they delivered Mr. Pangman³ & St. Germain in Spring-93.— The Men raised some bark and Gummed their Canoes during the time we employed trading with the Indians, One of whom insisted on accompanying us to our Wintering ground (which he supposes to be a good Beaver Country) notwithstanding Mr. Shaw has represented to him the dangers to which he will be exposed from the variety of different nations which resort to that place. Towards night arrived at the begining of the tracking ground⁴ where we camped. This part of the River is an object of terror to the whole band, the usual mode of navigation is here rendered useless by the Strength of the Current, which makes it necessary to haul the Canoes up along Shore with a line, for that purpose, for the space of 6 days on an exceeding bad Road.⁵ The weather has been extreemly

¹ To mend the canoes.

² On the survey maps two rapids are given, Squaw Rapid and Tobin's Rapid. The two thought of as one are the Grand Rapid. Tobin is probably a corruption for Thorburn, often Thoburn, whose "ancient Fort" was not far above.

³ See page xxxviii f.

⁴ M'Gillivray is now passing from the lowest of the three prairie levels, viz., that of Lake Winnipeg and the Red River, to the second level, that of the Province of Saskatchewan—roughly. The Pasquia Hills are the rampart of this higher level in the neighbourhood of the Saskatchewan River. They show their influence on it in the "height of the outer edge of its valley and in the precipitous banks of the river". From this point, on up to beyond the Forks, the voyageurs encountered a swift stream at times breaking into rapids. They did not attempt to paddle against it, but resorted to the tow line.

⁵ The point at which Alex. Henry, the younger, came to the tracking-ground can be estimated from his account with tolerable exactness at 25 miles below the river point near the present Canadian Pacific station Nipawin, (the "Falls" of Arrowsmith's map). Upper Nipawi, which was about six miles below the present

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cold for some time past.— Septr. 5th.—Arrived at Nepawi¹ about noon and found that Mr. Chastillain has built himself a House since his having abandoned South Branch.— Mr. Porter a Clerk to the opposition has passed the Summer at this place as also a Canadian named 'Pichet' who arrived here in July with 3 Canoes of Goods:— This was part of an adventure sent by Cadotte &c from Michilimackinac last year to the Red River, where the greatest part of the goods had been pillaged by a tribe of Indians, and the remainder finding no market there was entrusted to the above mentioned Pichet who pretended a great knowledge of the trade and Natives of Fort *des Prairies* where he had formerly wintered in the service of the N.W. Co. Thither therefore he steered his course as soon as the communication was open expecting to make great returns in the summer with the fine assortment of Goods in his possession but arriving at Nepawi he was informed of what had happened at S.B. which intimidated him from proceeding any further. He has since then squandered away his Goods with the greatest profusion among the Natives, promising them they would be no longer *pitifull*² as he expected at

Fort à la Corne, is about 45 miles farther up and about 25 miles below the Forks. A long day's journey from the Forks, say 30 miles, brought Henry to the end of the tracking-ground. Thus the total distance tracked works out at about 125 miles for which M'Gillivray allows 6 days but in fact as his *Journal* shows took about 5½ days. This averages at about 26 miles a day, which is very near Henry's rate also.

¹ "The place where one stands and waits", so-called from the Indian families waiting here for the return of the men who had gone with the furs to the Bay. M'Gillivray reached the tracking-ground on the evening of Sept. 3, and Nipawi on the 5th at noon. One and a half days' travel at 23 miles per day would bring him a little above the Cadotte Rapids, the uppermost of three rapids indicated as "Falls" on Arrowsmith's map. The Cadotte Rapids, probably so named from Alex. Henry's the elder's partner in the trade, were then the Nipawi of these times. This is borne out by Matthew Cocking's *Journal*, Aug. 9 to 11, 1772, for he arrived on the afternoon of his second day's tracking at the place where "the Natives always waits for their friends", i.e., Nipawi. Cocking says: "The French formerly had a house here." Accordingly this may be the true site of the Fort of Louis François de la Corne.

² Destitute.

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least 20 Canoes this Fall with which he would do them *Charity*. Whether his expectations were well founded or not, is not known, but it is very certain they were too sanguine, there being hitherto no appearance of this extraordinary supply.— The Indians therefore look upon him to be a lying impostor, which they do not scruple to tell him when they reflect on his large promises in the summer.— We found also a few Tents of Crees¹ & Sauteaux at this place who rejoiced at our arrival as they expected to get wherewith to divert themselves from Mr. Shaw.

Sept. 6th.—The English People arrived.— Our people are employed drying the Bales and gumming² the Canoes.— Delivered to Mr. Chastillain the loading of a Canoe (25 Pieces) which had proceeded with us from Grand Portage to remain here.— 7th.—Mr. Shaw harangued the Indians and made them a present of 2 Kegs Rum with the usual ceremonies.— Having found a few horses here it was resolved that a party should proceed ashore for the future to hunt for the Canoes. This Party consisted of Mr. S., Mr. McDonald and myself with 3 men, but as the face of the Country is entirely covered with impenetrable woods³ we were obliged to lead the Horses along shore, till we arrived at the Plains.— Sept. 7th.—The Canoes departed about noon and soon after we followed them with 10 Horses, for it was thought expedient to take a few spare ones to relieve the others occasionally which we afterwards found to be

¹ See pp. lxiii.

² Repairing with "pitch", *i.e.*, gum from the pine forests.

³ As they took to horse at Lower Nipawi, they were still well within the forest belt—especially as they chose to ride up the northern bank of the river (p. 21). Travelling at about 25 miles a day they would be opposite the Forks on the 9th. The end of the tracking ground was a day's journey above the Forks (Alex. Henry, the younger's, *Journal* p. 485-6) and some 17 miles below Prince Albert of to-day.

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of great advantage.— 10th.—Arrived at the end of the tracking ground to the great satisfaction of the men many of whom are estropied¹ by the hard duty they have performed for some days Past.— 11th.—The Canoes went off at day break and at Sun rise a violent Storm of wind and rain arose and continued with great fury 'till noon.— We spent all the morning searching for our Horses who had strayed into the woods to shelter themselves from the Storm, after which we set off across the Country through paths never trodden by the foot of man. At sunset we descended to the Campment, which had been agreed upon the preceding night, but to our mortification we perceived the Canoes near a league a head,—this space was an impenetrable forrest of Pines, Poplars &c interspersed with thick underwood and trees which had fallen with age or had been destroyed by fire—it would have been difficult to proceed here *en plein jour*:—imagine then our situation in a dark night without any path to guide us and having a band of unruly horses to drive before us.— After having scrambled along for about 2 Hours through thorns & brambles we found ourselves impeded by a River², which we were forced to cross *a la nage* and to compleat our vexation we lost half of the Horses and it being impossible to proceed any further [with] the rest we abandoned them also: in short we arrived at the Campment after midnight with scarcely a Shoe or whole Jacket amongst us, and whatever part of our Skins had been exposed was as miserably scratched as if it had suffered the application of the claws of a wild cat.— The men having perceived some Buffaloes on the South

¹ Anglicized French.—*Estropié*, exhausted

² Probably the Sturgeon R. (Arrowsmith's "Setting River"), with John MacDonald of Garth's shanty ("N.W.") on the farther bank (p. 1). During the evening M'Gillivray must have passed over against the site of the present Prince Albert.

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Side it was resolved that we should spend the next day in hunting as our provisions began to fail.— 12th.—Killed a red Deer in the River before our camp: at day break, shortly thereafter a party crossed the River to hunt for Buffaloes. They returned about noon after having killed a dozen, which were divided among the people to whom it proved an agreeable supply, they having eat but little fresh meat for 4 months past.— 13th.—A party crossed the River at day break to search for one of the Hunters who did not return the preceding night, we supposed him killed by the Bull or devoured by Bears which gave us great uneasiness, however he arrived in the Afternoon very much fatigued having strayed about all night in search of the Campment:— He carried the tongues of seven Buffaloes which he had killed, but we did not reap the benefit of his good fortune, the Wolves having devoured them in the night.— Sept. 15th.—Arrived the *Mounté*¹ where a road goes to the S.B. Fort accross the neck or point of land which separates the 2 Branches of the River. The face of the Country here assumes a different appearance, hitherto our way has been obstructed by thick woods, on each side of the River but now extensive plains interspersed with only a few tufts of wood, open themselves to the view, and extend to the utmost extremity of your sight round the Horizon which appears as plain as in the midst of the Ocean in a perfect calm:— what increases the beauty of this agreeable prospect, is, the innumerable herds of Buffaloes and various

¹ The anglicized form of *La Montée*—the region in which the Gentlemen and their clerks took to horse (monter, to mount) to hunt and provide fresh meat for the canoes. Alex. Henry, the younger, calls it also The Crossing Place (*Journal* p. 490). The road was doubtless an Indian trail which ran north towards Green Lake and Isle à la Crosse. The portion south of the river, between Duck Lake and the Crossing (see Arrowsmith's map) appears to have been in use till this day. Fort Carlton (H. B. Co.) and Fort La Montée (N. W. Co.) were not built till about 1810. (*Ibid* p. 585, and Franchère *Narrative* p. 325).

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other animals that inhabit those delightfull regions of plenty, which always afford a seasonable supply of food to our men, who are now almost worn out after the fatigues of a long and toilsome voyage.— Mr. Shaw distributed arms and amunition amongst the men as the enemies country was not far off, and the Horses were crossed to the South side of the River (where the Gros Ventres were supposed to be in ambush) that the Cavaliers might form a reconnoitering party before the Canoes. About 4 O'clock P.M., La Frances Canoe struck against a stump and sunk to the Bottom in 7 feet Water, but by timely assistance every thing was recovered, except 2 Pieces which were afterwards dived for, but one of them happening to be a Keg of Powder was entirely damaged and consequently thrown away.— 16th.— The Canoes departed in the morning and soon after, we mounted our Horses and sett off accross the meadows¹: towards 10 O'clock we killed 2 Bulls, the most delicious parts of which we roasted for Breakfast at the side of a stream of excellent Water. At noon we found a Beaver lodge built on the side of a small dam; as it appeared a task of no great difficulty we resolved to work it; for this purpose we began by cutting a passage in the dam, in order to evacuate the water which left them without any resource to save themselves but their lodge. This we afterwards attacked, and destroyed in a few hours the fabric which their ingenuity had been constructing for many years—in short we killed the whole of this family, which consisted of 4 old Beavers with as many young ones and carried them to the Canoes which we found camped at the *Recoude*.²— 18th.—As we seldom

¹ The English for the French “prairie”.

² “The Elbow”, so called from the remarkable bend of the river's course from S. E. to N. E. The Canadian National Railway from Saskatoon to North Battleford and Edmonton crosses the river at this point. The French Canadian “recoude” signifies an elbow of a stove-pipe.

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stop the Canoes at meal time, we are obliged to depend on our good fortune at the Chace to satisfy the calls of hunger. We have this day made a delicious breakfast on the choice bits of a Stag which Mr. Shaw killed.—Arrived at night at the Eagle Mountain River where we found the Canoes camped and the people in great consternation having perceived 2 *Cavaliers* on the Bank of the River who scampered away into the Plains on being observed; whether this account deserved credit could not be proved, but as it is infinitely better to be warned of the approach of an enemy than to be surprized by him, it was resolved to keep watch and the people were ordered to sleep with their arms ready. Mr. S. guarded us 'till midnight when he resigned his place to Mr. McD. and myself.— We passed the remainder of the night in the greatest tranquility, tho' some of the men started from their sleep in a great fright pretending to have heard the report of a gun.— 20th. Septr.—In the morning we killed 3 fine Cows and put some choice morsels to roast before a blazing fire under the shade of an ancient poplar. After having feasted like Aldermen on the Fat of the land and treated ourselves with hearty draughts out of the contents of a clear Stream that murmured among the trees and rushed into the River at a few yards distance, the people arrived and devoured the remainder of our feast with excellent appetites.— Tho' we kill abundance of animals to maintain the people, yet the Buffaloes are not so numerous as usual in these parts, we are therefore of opinion that some Tribe of Indians hover about us and frighten away the animals to some other place less frequented by man. At 3 O'clock P.M. Mr. Shaw killed a large Stag; soon after I crawled up to 2 Bulls and shot one of them through the heart; the other

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hung over him as if to lament the loss of his companion, and received my shot in the ribs upon which he advanced a little further and lay down with great composure. I was not unaware of the danger of approaching a wounded Buffalo in a capacity to shew his resentment, but I apprehended no danger from him, as he seemed mortally wounded, however he soon convinced me of my error, by suddenly starting up and springing upon me with the quickness of lightening, and before I had time to fly he caught me betwixt his horns (one of which tore my shirt and Jacket) and tossed me a great height in the air. Tho' I was greatly stunned by the Fall, yet I recovered myself as soon as possible and discharged my piece at his head, which, with seeing Mr. Shaw running to my assistance, made him scamper away into the woods, where we pursued him and found him dead at a small distance, and if the approaching night had not prevented us we should have kindled a fire upon his hatefull carcase.— The next day Sept. 21st was spent in hunting at Mr. Pangmans¹ ancient Fort, and the meat which the Hunters killed was separated among the Canoes. Two men who had gone a different direction from the others found a fire round which marrow bones had been roasted some time before and on their return home they perceived two men a horseback who ran into the woods.— Adventures of this kind are so common that they deserve little attention, for scarcely a day passes without producing appearances which are supposed to portend immediate danger; indeed some of the people are so terrified at the

¹ Peter Pangman's Fort of about 1780, probably the second of the two Canadian forts mentioned by Oman as being in the Eagle Hills in competition with the Hudson's Bay Company, the other being Mr. Cole's (p. xxxiii f). David Thompson's Itinerary shows that Cole's fort was nine miles down from the Battle River. It was on the north bank (Alex. Henry's, the younger's, *Journal* p. 498). M'Gillivray is on the south bank, within two days' journey from Eagle Mountain River, and about half a days' run from the Battle River; this would be some 12 miles below it.

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Idea of an attack, and the cruelties committed at S:B: have made such an impression on their minds that they mistake their shadows for enemies:— A Buffalo, a Stag & a Wolf have been successively mistaken for Gros Ventres meditating our destruction and what encreases this consternation is, the apprehensions of the Women who cannot quit the Canoes without plaguing us with false alarms. It is fortunate however that only a few are of this disposition, the greatest number of the men are well determined to defend themselves if necessary.— 22nd.—Arrived at Battle River¹ about noon where the people gummed the Canoes. We were sitting down to breakfast under the shade of a tree when all of a sudden we heard an exclamation of *Aux Armes! Aux Armes! voila les gens du large*,² and looking accross the River we perceived 5 men sculking among the Bushes. The Camp was immediately in commotion & Mr. S: McD. & me with 4 men, all well armed threw ourselves into a Canoe and traversed the River when lo! instead of an enemy, with whom we expected to come to immediate action, we found a few peaceable Assiniboine young men, returning from a Horse Stealing expedition in which they were not successfull.— This discovery accounted for all the alarms, which the appearance of the supposed Gros Ventres had already given us. The young men informed us, that their camp, consisting of 60 lodges, was at the Eagle Mountain near the River, but being conscious of having merited chastisement from us for some late acts of injustice which they have committed, they thought it imprudent to

¹ Neither M'Gillivray's account (1794) nor that of Alex. Henry, the younger (1808, p. 499f), gives any indication that there was then a trading-post at the mouth of the Battle River, the site of the present Battleford. David Thompson's map (1812), however, has the letters "N.W.Co." on the south bank of the Battle River.

² *Gens du large*—people of the open plains, a descriptive term applied to the equestrian tribes, Gros Ventres, Blackfeet, etc.

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discover themselves openly, tho' they hovered round us at a distance.— They are a worthless indolent tribe, entirely addicted to sloth & laziness and if they can boast of any peculiar excellence, it is their dexterity at stealing Horses. This Year has produced several instances of this kind.— They Stole away about 40 Horses from Fort George last Winter and Spring, which we recovered from them on our voyage outwards, near their present situation when we were forced to treat them with more severity than ever they experienced before on such occasions. They returned again to the charge last summer as we understand by Mr. Finlays letter and stole 20 Horses more, which occasioned their concealing themselves this Fall.— But the most daring instance of this nature that ever was attempted, was committed 2 days after our arrival at Fort George, where they unmercifully swept away 84 Excellent Horses and immediately abandoned this part of the Country to possess them in security—a thing they could not expect to do in our neighbourhood.— We also learned from them that the *Gros Ventres* were supposed to have retired to the Rocky Mountains after the attack of S.B. a piece of information which rendered all future precautions respecting them unnecessary.— The Weather has been exceedingly cold for some time past—in the night and next day, snowed about 6 inches, which was next day partly dissolved by the heat of the Sun, & the 25th Septr. we arrived at Pine Island Fort¹ about Sunset.— The men regret the friendly reception that used to await them at this place after the fatigues of the Voyage, but it is now in a ruined condition, the buildings are consumed to ashes and in a few years no traces will remain, to shew that it has ever been inhabited by Christians. 26th.—Mr. McDonald

¹ See p. xli and p. xlix.

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with 2 men sett off for Fort George, distant about 2 days ride accross the Country. Buffalo are exceedingly numerous,—from the summit of a hill which afforded an extensive prospect, we observed the face of the Country entirely covered by them, in short they are numerous as the locusts of Egypt, and to give us passage they were forced to range themselves on both sides and we were no sooner Past than they closed their ranks as before.—28th. Septr.—We met Mr. Hughes¹ and 2 men from Fort George with fresh horses, we therefore resolved to proceed next day to the Fort distant 8 or 9 leagues.—29th Septr.—Left the Canoes in the morning which was extreemly cold. As we approached near the Fort animals became less numerous, a circumstance we greatly regretted being so well mounted and equipt for the chace; towards noon however we observed a band of about 30 Red Deer at a small distance. They were guarded by an aged Stag who far outshone the rest in size & strength, he was therefore singled out as an object of destruction, but after having pursued them some time, he unluckily stumbled into a Badger hole and in attempting to recover himself, his over grown Antlers stuck in the ground and he broke his neck: the foremost horse being frightened at this accident threw his rider and sett off at full speed in the midst of the Band, and it was not without some difficulty that we overtook him after having killed 4 deer. Most of these horses are trained from their youth to the exercise of hunting, their education indeed is not regular but practice makes them perfect. The Horse of this country tho' not large is bold and intrepid; he delights in the pleasures of the chace, and is so animated at sight of a Band of animals that he can

¹ James Hughes, the hero of Pine Island Fort (p. 1).

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scarcely be restrained from pursuing them. The operation of gelding is seldom performed by the Indians as it generally diminishes the strength and vigour of the Horse, he is therefore full of fire and can with ease outrun most of the large animals on which we depend for subsistence. We met Mr. Finlay¹ at a small distance from the Fort & arrived at 4 O'clock P.M.— We found all the people in good health after having passed a very disagreeable summer, in continual expectation of an incursion from the *Gens du large*, and during 6 weeks after receiving intelligence of what had happened below they remained as closely confined within the piquets as if they had actually been besieged.— Our neighbours the English abandoned their Fort² and took refuge in ours during these dangerous times. A party of Crees also resorted hither for safety and remained about a month when the want of provisions made it necessary to evacuate the Fort, and finding at length that the danger was imaginary from accounts which informed them that the enemy was at the Rocky Mountains, they renewed their former employments without any further apprehensions.

Sept. 30th.—The Canoes arrived without any accident and delivered the goods before Sun-set.

I shall hereafter extract for your information the most material circumstances out of the Fort Journal, which I am appointed to write, for it would be an endless undertaking to mention distinctly every occurrence that happens in a place of such extensive trade as this, surrounded by numerous tribes of Indians some of whom are continually at the Fort. I shall not be particular as to arrivals & departures or any thing else which would be unnecessary for you to know and which I have neither

¹ James Finlay, hitherto the partner in charge of Pine Island Fort.

² Buckingham House of the H. B. Co. (p. lviii.)

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time nor inclination to enumerate being generally employed in the vocations of my duty; and to avoid frequent repetitions of the reception of, and manner of trading with the Natives of this quarter I shall once for all give you a Short account of them.

When a Band of Indians approach near the Fort it is customary for the Cheifs to send a few young men before them to announce their arrival, and to procure a few articles which they are accustomed to receive on these occasions—such as Powder, a piece of Tobacco and a little paint to besmear their faces, an operation which they seldom fail to perform previous to their presenting themselves before the *White People*. At a few yards distance from the gate they salute us with several discharges of their guns, which is answered by hoisting a flag and firing a few guns. On entering the house they are disarmed, treated with a few drams and a bit of tobacco, and after the pipe has been plyed about for some time they relate the news with great deliberation and ceremony relaxing from their usual taciturnity in proportion to the quantity of Rum they have swallowed, 'till at length their voices are drowned in a general clamour. When their lodges are erected by the women they receive a present of Rum proportioned to the Nation & quality of the Cheifs and the whole Band drink during 24 hours and sometimes much longer for nothing—a privilege of which they take every advantage—for in the seat of an Opposition¹ profusion is absolutely necessary to secure the trade of an Indian. When the drinking match has subsided they begin to trade they obtain the large Keg at 30 Beavers,² long Guns at 14, fine Stds.

¹ The H. B. Co.'s Buckingham House across the gully.

² The individual beaver skin was the unit of value in barter. Strouds worth eight beaver skins per fathom, common strouds six per fathom, three-point

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8 p fm. com: Std. 6 p fm. 3 pt. Blankets 6, 1 p Trenches 3, 1 med: Ax 2, 1 fm. B. Tobacco 3 Beavers, 1 Sp Twist 2, 20 Balls 1, &c &c &c in short they procure the Goods at cheaper rates here than in most other places in this Country, which with many other advantages they possess, is the consequence of separate interests. Before their departure they are equipt with Amunition, Tobacco and many other articles as exigencies may require, and this is renewed as often as they come to the Fort. This with little difference is ye manner in which the Beaver Hunters are treated, but the *Gens du large* consisting of Blackfeet, Gros Ventres, Blood Indians, Piedgans &c., are treated with less liberality, their commodities being chiefly Horses, Wolves, Fat & Pounded meat which are not sought after with such eagerness as the Beaver.— Octr. 3d, 1794—By the arrangements which have been made at the Portage this year, Mr. Finlay has been appointed to command the Lower Department of this River in consequence of which he has this day departed with 12 men in 2 Canoes in order to take proper Measures against the opposition which is supposed will be very strong below. The neighbouring Indians having got intelligence of our arrival are pouring in continually from all quarters and the Fort since that time has been a scene of drunkenness and brutality. This day in a quarrel betwixt two factions of the Crees an Indian was butchered in a cruel manner—another young man was also stabbed in the neck, but it is hoped he will recover. The drinking match is therefore stopped to prevent more mischief at this time.— The Indians are entirely pitiful, having made no summer hunt: the

blankets six, one pair trenches, an iron instrument for cutting into the beaver houses, six, one medium sized axe, two, one fathom Brazil tobacco, three, one Spencer's twist (a brand of tobacco), two.

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expences of equipping are therefore more considerable than usual.- 7th.—About 15 men who are permitted to pass the Winter in the Plains, have been this day equipped with amunition &c and whatever furs they chance to Kill will be traded on the Indian terms.— Sent off 2 men who are engaged to hunt for the Fort during 3 months.¹— At noon we were informed that a small Band of Blackfeet were intercepted by a party of Crees on the opposite side of the River and in danger of being Pillaged; Mr. Shaw therefore with 2 men and myself immediately crossed the River to protect them; the Crees had already forced a few Horses from them which were restored on our arrival, which happened time enough to prevent their coming to blows.— This Nation having behaved last year insolently at Pine Island & carried away a few horses, have been since considered as enemies, but a Party of Old men finding it impossible to subsist without our commodities came in last summer to beg for peace promising to return the Horses that were stolen & satisfy me for my adventure with them last winter, Mr. Finlay having given them some encouragement at that time to prevent their abandoning the Fort entirely, they now venture to pay us a visit tho' not without many apprehensions of danger which appears from a timidity which it is impossible for them to conceal. Before their departure Mr. Shaw took 8 Horses from them and gave them to understand that this was their proportion of the number of horses that were to be returned.

Octo: 10th—The Hunters have killed 2 Bulls. They report that animals are very scarce. Arranged the Goods and put an assortment of Goods into the Shop lately built for the men. Arranged also the Guns and laid up a few

¹ The 15 men were employees needed for the voyage, but superfluous at the fort. The two men were to hunt for the fort to keep it supplied with fresh meat.

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for the Spring— Dried a few cases of knives & hats which have been wet since the voyage. Engaged two Indians to hunt for the Fort. The Plains arround us are all on fire.— We hear that the animals fly away in every dirrection to save themselves from the flames, an attempt which is often rendered abortive when the fire is cherished by a breeze of wind, which drives it along with such fury that the fleetest horse can scarcely outrun it. The Indians often make use of this method to frighten away the animals in order to enhance the value of their own provisions. We are almost suffocated with smoke which the wind carries away in immense columns before it.— At night a poor Woman who had been stabbed by her Husband in a drinking match 2 days ago departed this life in great agonies.—a few moments before she expired she was delivered of a dead child, who she requested should be Interred by her side. She also requested to be wrapt up in a fathom of fine Strouds that she might appear with decency before her ancestors in the land of Spirits. This melancholy circumstance naturally leads one to reflect on the miserable condition of Women in this Country, where they are considered as the Slaves of the men and treated accordingly.— When unlimited authority is placed in the hands of a savage he looks on the least opposition to his will as an unpardonable offence, which the ferocity of his temper excites him to punish with the greatest severity and cruelty. From the moment an Indian purchases his wife from her father, he regards her in the same light as any other part of his property, entirely at his disposal, possessing the Power of life and death over her with no other restrictions, than the resentment of her relations, which if he is a brave Indian gives him little concern. She is obliged to undergo

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all the drudgery which occurs in the domestic affairs of the family. She is continually employed in drawing Water, carrying Wood, searching for horses and every other kind of employment which the Husband thinks below the dignity of a Warrior or hunter to assist her in, and when she has the misfortune to incur his displeasure for any neglect of duty or want of respect She is certain to experience the brutal effects of his resentment. But notwithstanding the boundless authority of the men (an authority which the strong acquire over the weak) a few of the other sex wear the Breeches: Of this number was the unfortunate sufferer in question. She in a fit of drunken jealousy abused her husband in the grossest terms, dragged him by the hair accross the fire and was guilty of many other acts of violence, which proved her strength to be superior to her modesty; though the poor fellow stood much in awe of her well repeated corrections, yet this severe discipline before many spectators roused his passions, he snatched hold of a dagger & stabbed her in 8 Places, and notwithstanding every assistance was immediately administered, her life could not be saved. Soon after another woman was carried in to dress a severe bite which she had received from her husband, *The two Hearts*, on the fleshy part of her arm.— 12th—A small band of Piegans¹ arrived in the morning and traded instantly to prevent any quarrels between them and the other nations at the House. Soon after their departure 2 tribes of Assiniboines arrived. The one is called Strong Wood & the other Grand River Assiniboine²

¹ P. lxvii.

² Alex. Henry, the younger, speaks of Grand River Assiniboines as coming from the south side of the North Saskatchewan (p. 624). Here they come in company with the Strong Wood Assiniboines of the Battle River. The Grand River must be a descriptive term for the South Saskatchewan. The Strong Wood Assiniboines were beaver hunters and came with their precious furs to Fort George, passing Buckingham House by—hence their generous reception. See p. lxiv.

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the former Band came altogether here in consideration of which they have got a large present of Rum to divert themselves during the night. The latter band consists of a few remaining stragglers who were absent from the large band when they stole our horses—they suppose *them* to have directed their course to the Red River.— At night a few Canoe Assiniboine¹ young men arrived with some Skins to trade Rum & Tobacco with which they intend to meet the Band on their way to the House.— The Hunters Killed a Stag: they report that a few of the men who have received permission to Winter in the meadows, frighten away the animals from the quarter where they are stationed. Mr. S. therefore ordered me and 2 men to go in pursuit of them and command them to return to the Fort, a thing they declined to do at the instance of the Hunters tho' they used Mr. Shaws authority for that purpose.— 17th Octor.—I am just returned from my trip after the men whom I had some difficulty to discover, they having been camped in the midst of a wood, which they had chosen purposely to secure their concealment dreading much to be recalled to the Fort:—they are now returning home much against their inclinations and will be here tomorrow. During my absence the *Gauche & Bleneau Assis* the Two greatest Cree Chiefs with some other Indians arrived at the Fort and drank without intermission for 48 hours. The *Gun Case & Marching Wolf* two Crees have departed with 4 men to hunt for us, one of the hunters formerly engaged having burnt his face with powder returned to the Fort for medicines to cure himself. We have now 6 Hunters employed in maintaining us in Provisions, it may therefore reasonably be expected that when the Buffalo approach a sufficient

¹ From the region beyond the South Saskatchewan and the Fishing Lakes on the Qu'Appelle R. Distances were nothing to the Indians of the Plains.

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quantity of meat will soon be provided for the Winter. About midnight a party of drunken Indians bent upon mischief went to the English House and upon being denied admittance they broke open the gates and insulted Mr. Tomison and all his people very grossly.— 20th Octor.—The *Grand Soteau & French Bastard* with about 20 men arrived,—these being Cheifs of considerable influence were presented after the usual ceremonies were over with 2 large Kegs of Rum and the night therefore was devoted to intoxication and tumult:— In these debauches we take every precaution to prevent bloodshed among the natives, being interested in whatever concerns them; for a quarrel or dispute betwixt any two tribes may occasion revolutions which would be very prejudicial to the Concern; besides we are commanded by humanity to preserve the lives of our fellow creatures where it is in our power and to protect the oppressed is also a duty we are desired to perform. This kind of assistance is often necessary in an Indian Country, where the weak become naturally a prey to the strong, and where force is universally supposed to confer right. This maxim is sometimes serviceable to us where fair means fail to accomplish our ends. Since our arrival this has been one continued scene of drunkenness and riot, of clamour and confusion. Indians are flocking in multitudes to the Fort from all directions to allay their thirst by procuring once more a Skinful of Rum. Men generally employed carrying home meat from the Hunters tents and we are happy to learn that the Buffaloes are very numerous at a small distance. Fires are still raging arround us and unless a fall of snow or rain will quickly prevent it all the pasturage in our neighbourhood will be destroyed—a circumstance that would involve us in many distresses from famine &

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want.— 23d.—Tyed up 13 Bales of 70 Skins each, which with 30 formerly made, amounts in all to 43 Bales.— The *Tailleur* a Beaver River Indian arrived in a miserable condition, having been pillaged of his wife and baggage by two young men from whom he narrowly escaped with life.— Soon after another Cree arrived in pursuit of his Wife, who has eloped a few days ago, they give mutual consolation to each other over a pot of Rum. About noon a few Blood-Indians¹ & Circes² followed by a band of Assiniboines arrived with a small quantity of pounded meat & Grease.— Men employed in tearing up and burning the stumps arround the Fort to clear a Spot for the Indian lodges. We have hitherto been in daily expectation of the arrival of David Grant, it having been rumoured at G. Portage that a considerable proportion of his Canoes was destined for this place. The Season being now far advanced without any appearance of his party, it is conjectured that the reports which were circulated below respecting the intention of the Gros Ventres have intimidated him from attempting to pass through their lands. If his remaining below has proceeded from this it is certainly an obligation which we ought to acknowledge to them notwithstanding their late depredations, for this circumstance will I hope be productive of greater advantage to the concern, than all their unsuccessfull attempts have been prejudicial to it. But this will not diminish the severity with which they deserve to be treated, when they venture to return to the Fort. From the precautions which have been taken to oppose him this year with success, it is hoped he will have reason to repent of his rashness in having undertaken an opposition against the North West Company

¹ P. lxvii.

² Sarsi. P. lxviii.

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upon such a Slender foundation. It is certain however that had he proceeded this far, it would be impossible to prevent his making excellent returns with a small proportion of goods, there being such numerous tribes of Indians in this department that he could easily procure a part of their furs in spite of every effort of ours to the contrary. The weather since our arrival has been very fine & warm. The fires have raged with great fury over the face of the Country, but there is reason to hope that they will soon be extinguished, the weather being this day boisterous and windy, a certain indication of Rain or snow.— Tyed up 8 Bales.— 30th.—Examined the Kegs of powder by which it unluckily appears that one half of it is damaged. Arranged some bad Tobacco for the arrival of the Blackfeet. The *Star* a *Strong Wood* Assiniboine Cheif arrived: he reports that vast herds of Buffaloes are at the Paint River¹ where he intends to make a *Pound* in the course of the Winter.— Bois Verd arrived in a great fright from the Hunters Tent above, having been fired upon by an Indian whom he met on the road, and who would certainly have killed him had he not saved himself by flight. Mr. Hughes prepares to set off tomorrow to discover who this miscreant is that he may be punished according to his desert. Tyed up one Bale which in all makes 51 Bales of Beaver & Wolves.

Novr. 4th.—Snowed about 8 inches yesterday and last night great quantities of snow is driving in the River, which we hope will soon be covered with Ice, it being a very dissagreeable and difficult job to ferry the Indians accross. At 10 O'clock old Nashigam and the little Bougon arrived with a few more Crees. Soon after 2 Canoe Assiniboines arrived and got drunk along with the

¹ Vermilion R. to the south of Fort George and entering the Saskatchewan 32 miles farther down.

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Crees. Tyed up 3 Bales of Beaver. At night a young man from the Gauche & Bleanreau Assis arrived with the news according to Mr. Shaws request to that purpose some time ago. He reports that a War party has been formed among the Crees; in consequence, the greatest number of them are already departed on an expedition against the Slave Indians¹:— If the account be true it will diminish our expectations of good returns this year, they being the principal Beaver Hunters in this Department, but reports of this nature are so vague and uncertain that they merit little credit, till the matter be confirmed by evidence that can be depended on. He informs us also that the Blackfeet will soon visit us, and that the Gros Ventres hitherto stationed at the Rocky Mountains have separated in Two Bands, one of them supposed to be that which attacked S.B. has formed an alliance with the Snake Indians², formerly their mortal enemies, with intention to abandon this quarter for ever, and the other band Steer their course in this direction to obtain peace of us and the nations that surround us. 6th.—Mr. Tomison paid us a visit, but was called home soon after by a message which informed that the express from H.B. was arrived. The accounts which we receive from the Lower Department are rather imperfect owing to the unsettled state of affairs, which prevented the Gentn. below from writing fully on the subject. We understand however, that David Grant has established Posts at Nepawi & Sturgeon River the seats of the opposition last year, and that Messrs McKenzie³ &

¹ P. lxviii.

² P. lxvix.

³ In the "Arrangements of Proprietors, clerks, interpreters . . . of the North West Company, 1799", Daniel Mackenzie is put down as in the Upper Fort des Prairies Department. This is probably the same man, now at the Lower Fort des Prairies.

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Chastillain oppose him at these places. The Arrangements that Mr. Finlay made on his arrival are hitherto unknown, but we expect an express from him very soon. Mr. Tomison is much dissatisfied that no goods are sent him by this express; he had hitherto flattered himself with receiving a supply of 3 or 4 Canoes & according to agreement he had shortly after his arrival here sent off 8 men with a large Band of Horses to convey the Goods by land from a certain place that was agreed upon, being convinced that the lateness of the season would prevent the Canoes from performing the whole voyage. The men however after having performed the whole journey, perceived a smoke on the opposite side of the River, which they supposed to issue from the Camp of some Indians who they were apprehensive might steal their Horses, they therefore faced about and directed their course to the Fort where they arrived 5 nights ago, without having seen the least appearance of what they wanted.— In the mean time the Canoe containing the express, arrived at the place of assignation and remained some time in expectation of the Horses from this place, till at length the Ice precluding every possibility of proceeding further by water they secured the Canoe & Baggage in the woods and arrived here after a Journey of 18 days. They left York Fort the 1st Sept. at which time the Ships from England did not arrive. The Men employed carrying home meat. Took a trip in the Carioles¹ in the afternoon.— Fine weather.— 10th Novr.—Three Circee Chiefs and 4 Piegan Chiefs arrived with about 20 Young men; Soon after the Yellow Duck & White Eagle (Crees) arrived and after receiving the usual present of Rum, they all retired to

¹Sleighs drawn by dogs.

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their lodges, to divert themselves during the remaining part of the night.— About 13 men in all went to the English House one of whose chiefs being related to a woman in this Fort came at night with His furs. They Brought altogether about 9 Bales and a little provisions.— 12th.—The *Belle homme* a Cree, & *Bear Hunter* an Assiniboine Chief arrived with a few Young Men. Shortly thereafter 2 Piegan Chiefs arrived; one of whom having never seen a Fort before, was dubious where to enter, but was directed hither by a Chief of his own Nation who departed yesterday. He made a present of his favorite Horse and *Bonnet de Guerre*¹ to Mr. Shaw—two invaluable articles in the estimation of an Indian. The weather has been changeable for a few days past;—the night generally produces a few Inches of snow, which is dissolved by the heat of the Sun next day:—upon the whole it is an exceeding fine Fall.— 16th.—Mr. Hughes & myself are just arrived from the Hunters Tent but with 20 Buffalos. The Hunters have been very successful for some time past and there is a fine quantity of fresh meat in the Hangard, notwithstanding the great consumption of about 80 men with near as many Women & children.² Two Piegan Chiefs with 7 young men arrived and near twice as many went to the English:—they have got a greater proportion of this tribe than any other that frequent these Forts,³ owing to some old connections,

¹ Feather War Bonnet.

² The consumption of meat at a fort may be gauged by Sir John Franklin's statement in his *Journey to the Polar Sea*, ed. 1829, vol. I, p. 229-30 : "At La Montée there were seventy Canadians and half-breeds, and sixty women and children, who consumed upwards of seven hundred pounds of buffalo meat daily, the allowance per diem for each man being eight pounds : a proportion not so extravagant as may at first appear, when allowance is made for bone, and the entire want of farinaceous food or vegetables."

³ The preference of the Piegans for the Hudson's Bay Co. would be due to the wintering of a number of men among them—David Thompson about 1787-8, from Manchester House, Peter Fidler 1792-3 from Buckingham House (T.R.S.C., 1913, Sect. 2, p. 118.)

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betwixt them, but this Superiority is amply compensated to us, by having the trade of near $\frac{2}{3}$ of all the other nations.— Upon examination it appears that we have already traded 70 Bales of Beaver and Wolves besides 20 Bear Skins of various sizes and a good quantity of dried provisions.

22nd.—Sent off 20 men for meat. A young man arrived from the *Grand Mains* Buffalo Pound at the Paint River for Tobacco &c.— Mr. McDonald and me are permitted to pay them a visit and Mr. Shaw sends the Chiefs 2 gallons Rum, 1 fm Tobacco & ammunition each to encourage them to make plenty pounded meat. 23d. Novr.—We sett off after breakfast with 10 men, who have obtained leave to visit the Pound in order to satisfy their curiosity by seeing the Buffalo enter it. At night killed a Bull, part of which we roasted for supper in a thicket of wood where we had chosen our Campment to secure us from the effects of a very cold northerly wind. We retired to rest at the usual time, like Don Quixote under the open Canopy of Heaven, wrapt up in our robes and enjoyed a refreshing nights rest, notwithstanding we found ourselves covered with 3 inches of Snow next morning.

At day break we mounted our Horses and arrived at the Pound at 10 O'clock. The Chiefs of the Band welcomed us at the entrance of the Camp, from whence the Master of the Pound conducted us into his Lodge, where a feast was quickly prepared and served round. The laws of hospitality are strictly observed by most of the friendly tribes of this Country :—they bestow the best part of the Lodge covered with Clean robes on a Stranger; treat him with great attention and respect; in short they ever anticipate his wants by providing every thing in

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their power which they suppose to be most acceptable; indeed their officiousness is sometimes disgusting particularly in their Medicine feasts, where the Guests are forced to Swallow whatever quantity of food is presented before them. On one of these occasions I was supplied with about 3 lbs of *Pimican*, a composition made of equal parts of Pounded Meat & Grease, and tho' I would willingly dispense with $\frac{2}{3}$ of the quantity, yet I was under the necessity of eating it all, as the contrary would be considered an unpardonable insult by the Master of the ceremony. These people are remarkable for a dirty slovenly disposition—paying no regard to decency or cleanliness. On my asking for a drink of Water, a young woman presented me with a wooden dish (encrusted with the remainder of many a delicious feast) containing some in which a child had been washed a few moments before & which was afterwards cooled by the addition of a little snow, & the Kettle in which the operation had been performed was used soon after to boil meat for our next repast.—On arriving at the Camp our noses were assailed by an offensive smell which would have proved fatal to more delicate organs : It proceeded from the Carcasses in the Pound and the mangled limbs of Buffaloes scattered among the Lodges, but another substance which shall be nameless contributed the most considerable part of this diabolical odour.—In the afternoon we were gratified by seeing the Buffalo enter the Pound;—they were conducted thither by two small fences beginning on each side of the door and extending wider the farther they advance in the Plain: from behind these the Indians Waved their robes as the Buffaloes were passing to direct their course streight towards the Pound, which was so well constructed on the declivity of a small hill

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that it was invisible till you arrived at the gate. The poor animals were scarce enclosed, when showers of arrows were discharged at them as they rushed round the Pound making furious attempts to revenge themselves on their foes, till at length being overcome with wounds & loss of blood they were compelled to yield to their oppressors and many of them were cut to pieces before the last remainder of life had forsook them. Of all the methods which the Indians have devised for the destruction of this usefull animal,—the Pound is the most successful. Next day an express arrived from Mr. Shaw to recall us home immediately, the Blackfeet being near the Fort. We therefore mounted our Horses and arrived about midnight. Mr. Shaw informed us that they had already sent several Cree Chiefs to the Fort, with offers of returning all the Horses they had stolen, to secure a friendly reception as they seemed very apprehensive of being treated with severity. He also informed us that in consequence of these negotiations they proposed to come in next day, their Camp being about 2 leagues distant from the fort.—It was this Band that pillaged me last year, I hope therefore that this occasion will enable me to get some satisfaction for that disagreeable circumstance.—

Novr. 26th.—Early in the morning 12 young men arrived for tobacco, for 20 Blackfeet & Blood Indian Chiefs & shortly thereafter the whole Band appeared upon the River where about 30 men separated for the English House whilst all the rest amounting to 70 or 80 men marched slowly towards us. On arriving at the Gate 14 Chiefs leading as many Horses advanced before the rest and delivered them to Mr. Shaw with very uncommon gestures : they afterwards entered the Fort,

leaving their arms however with the women being probably affraid of putting them in our possession according to custom, as it would preclude from them the means of defence in case of extremities. This number of Horses being far below our expectations Mr. S. resolved to have 10 more;—for this purpose I was ordered out with a few men to choose them in their Camp, which after some resistance we accomplished notwithstanding their exertions to the contrary. I employed every method in my power to discover any of the miscreants who were personally concerned in my unlucky adventure last winter, but after many unsuccessfull endeavours I could only learn that they did not dare to accompany their relations; upon this I entered the Hall where the principal Men were assembled and being transported with rage at seeing no likelihood of receiving any atonement for the Injury I had Suffered, I sprung upon their greatest cheif the *Gros Blanc* & offered him an indignity which he will always remember with anger and resentment. They immediately made me a present consisting of a Horse, some finely ornamented Robes leggins &c and tho' he contributed his share yet he could not conceal his vexation at being so much humbled before so many spectators.—Some Crees who were present exulted much in his disgrace and one in particular the *Sitting Badger* a Cheif of some influence, whose brother had been killed a few years past by the *Gros Blanc*, observed to me that he had grasped his dagger to assist me if it had been found necessary and regreted much that I did not kill him outright.—This formidable cheif is universally feared by all the neighbouring nations, his immense size contributes Greatly to this distinction & some acts of personal courage which he has displayed on many occasions

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have established his reputation so firmly that he is supposed to be the most daring and intrepid Indian in this Department. He remained a considerable time in the Hall in a state of suspense revolving in his mind in what manner to proceed : at length he issued out in a transport of fury to make preparations for instant departure, threatening vengeance against me, but his relations flocking about him in numbers opposed his design and after many entreaties they persuaded him to relinquish it;—And next morning a general peace was concluded betwixt all parties, tho' this circumstance plainly shewed that he retained a lively sense of what had passed.—This discipline being the first instance of severity exhibited in this quarter has produced a very sensible effect in their manners—from being insolent and overbearing they are become entirely submissive and comport themselves with great circumspection to avoid giving offence :—they even deliver up their women to the unlawfull embraces of the men to purchase their lost favor—a custom hitherto held in some kind of dishonour among the tribe.—This treatment has also produced a wonderfull alteration in their mode of trading.—I have seen one of this tribe employ a $\frac{1}{2}$ hour in bartering a Dozen Wolves and twice as many *Depouilles*¹ and so unreasonable as to demand a Gun, Pistol, or any other article that attracted his attention for one Skin and yet seem but little dissappointed on being offered 2 feet Tobacco for it. Now; they trade more expeditiously; accept whatever is given in return for their commodities with a good grace; and seem thankful and satisfied with any trifling present, tho' our usual liberality to them is greatly withdrawn.—During 3 days which they spent at the Fort was traded 16 Bales of 50 Wolves each, 800 lbs.

¹ The fat on the ribs and back.

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Pounded meat with a sufficient quantity of Fat to employ twice as much, 20 Buffalo robes and 12 Bear Skins—a trade almost One half inferior to last year's, which shews that they had no inclination to hunt 'till a freindly intercourse with the Fort would be established.—The Inhabitants of the Plains are so advantageously situated that they could live very happily independent of our assistance. They are surrounded with innumerable herds of various kinds of animals, whose flesh affords them excellent nourishment and whose Skins defend them from the inclemency of the weather, and they have invented so many methods for the destruction of Animals, that they stand in no need of amunition to provide a sufficiency for these purposes. It is then our luxuries that attract them to the Fort and make us so necessary to their happiness. The love of Rum is their first inducement to industry; they undergo every hardship and fatigue to procure a Skinfull of this delicious beverage, and when a Nation becomes addicted to drinking, it affords a strong presumption that they will soon become excellent hunters. Tobacco is another article of as great demand as it is unnecessary.— Custom has however made it of consequence to them as it constitutes a principal part of their feasts & Superstitious ceremonies, and in these treaties of peace and councils of War, a few whiffs out of the medicine pipe confirms the articles that have been mutually agreed upon.— As for amunition it is rendered valuable by the great advantage it gives them over their enemies in their expeditions to the Rocky Mountains against the defenceless Slave Indians who are destitute of this destructive improvement of War. It is also required to Kill Beaver, but if the Fur Trade had not allured adventurers to this Country there would be no

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necessity for hunting this animal.— The rest of our commodities are indeed usefull to the Natives, when they can afford to purchase them, but if they had hitherto lived unacquainted with European productions it would not I beleive diminish their felicity.— 30th. Novemr.—The Blackfeet departed at several periods of the day. They informed us that a part of the *Gros Ventres* will probably visit the Fort in the course of the Spring, with 2 of the Women who were supposed to be killed at S. Branch.—The Crees contradicted the Report of the War Party, that was said to be forming among them. This being St. Andrews day, the Men observed the usual ceremony of presenting *Bouquets* to his Votaries, on which occasion Mr. Shaw gave them 6 Gallons Rum to divert themselves, which they did with a Vengeance, for one bottle succeeded another so quick that scarcely a man in the Fort escaped a Black eye.

December 5th 1794.—There being no Indians at the House a Party crossed the river to catch a Horse that was discovered in the woods yesterday, which we effected with some trouble and difficulty, he having been so long estranged from the Human Race that he took fright on our approach. He appeared a very beautifull Animal at a distance but upon examination we found him to be blind of an eye.

After midnight we were agreeably surprized at the arrival of Mr. Finlays Express from Sturgeon River. We understand among other things that David Grants people desert him; his only Clerk (Mr. Porter), 1 Interpreter and 3 Iroquois are now employed in the Companys service and little encouragement would be required to make the rest of his men forsake him:—this and the unfavorable appearance of his affairs are said to

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affect him much:—he appears much concerned and dejected at his misfortunes, and he has candidly confessed that his affairs are now entirely ruined.— Mr. Finlay makes a demand of about 20 Pieces of Goods consisting chiefly of Amunition & Rum—Articles of great value in the trade of this River.— We learn also that a Band of Sotos between Nepawi and Sturgeon River had a quarrel with the people of the lower Department last fall and tho' several Shots had been exchanged yet no person received any hurt, nor was the accident attended with any bad consequence, except the expenditure, of 2 Kegs H.Ws.¹ which were given to appease the Natives.

11th.—One of our hunters after having Killed 40 animals left us, to hunt Beaver. The *Grand Soteau* a Cree Cheif arrived from the Beaver Hills.² His nation amuse themselves driving Buffalo into a Pound—a very unfavorable circumstance for our Returns. Gave him a few articles to the value of 15 Brs.³ which will be charged to him in case he gives his Spring Hunt to the English, which we think he intends.— 13th Decemr.— The Fall trade being now almost over, Mr. Hughes has obtained permission to visit the Gentlemen of Lower Fort des Prairies; for this purpose he has this morning departed in company with 2 of our men and Mr. Finlays people; they carry on Dog Sledges, 5 Kegs High Wines, 1 Keg Powder, 1 Bag Ball, 10 Assorted Blankets and 30 Laced Capots⁴. Mr. Shaw sends down 10 Horses to be separated among those who sustained any loss by the Blackfeet last Winter. Arrived 4 Piegans in the afternoon: they are entirely pitifull, according to their

¹ High wines.

² South of the North Saskatchewan and about 25 miles N.E. of the present Edmonton.

³ Beavers.

⁴ Overcoats, containing from 2 to 3 yards of woollen cloth and having a hood.

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own expression, having only 40 Wolves & a small quantity of provisions.

17th—Two Canoes Assiniboine Cheifs namely the White Bear and *Fils de la Biche*¹ arrived, and soon after a Cree followed by the remaining Grand River Assiniboines in this quarter arrived. They Brought us in all about 500 Skins, 1500 lb pounded meat, a good quantity of Grease, fresh tongues &c &c.— 19th.—The Grand River Assiniboines went off to their Pound.— Soon after 6 young men arrived from the *Stars* Pound near the Paint River where all the strong wood Assiniboines are making Provisions.— At night 5 Blackfeet arrived one of whom is the Old Swans Son. The Swan was once the greatest Cheif of this Nation and was respected and esteemed by all the neighbouring tribes; his intentions towards the white people have been always honest and upright, and while he retained any authority his band never attempted anything to our prejudice. At length being worn out with age and debility he was forced to resign his place to the Gros Blanc, a man of unbounded ambition and ferocity, but he still held a respectable place in the Band. Leaving the Fort a few days ago he unluckily Stumbled over a Dog, and broke some blood vessel which occasioned his death 2 days thereafter;—his relations are now returned to lament his memory, which they do in very mournfull terms, and his Son wishing to forsake his former condition is ambitious of being considered a young Cheif desirous of tracing the footsteps of his father: And as a first mark of his quality Mr. Shaw has indulged him with a cloathing.² The Men are continually employed in carrying meat, there is now a large quantity

¹ Son of the hind or roe.

² The traders rewarded the heads of bands which “made a good hunt with clothing and insignia which gave them the rank of chief”; see p. 74.

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of provisions in the Hangard. We have already traded 100 Bales of Beaver & Wolves about 4865 lb Pounded meat besides a large quantity of Grease & *Depouilles*. 20th.—I have been very unwell for a few days past: I find a restlessness and Shivering attended with flying pains, which have this day encreased considerably.— I fear these symptoms forebode some violent disorder.

January 26th 1795.—I am just recovered from a violent fit of rheumatism or some other vile disorder of that nature which has confined me to my bed during 28 days. It reduced me much but my constitution at last overcome it, and no other Symptoms now remain, than a weakness which I hope will soon dissappear. Mr. Shaws friendly attention on this occasion merits my warmest obligations.— During my indisposition nothing of consequence transpired, it being a time of the year when little business occurs. Most of the Blackfeet have been again at the Fort and a few of all the other nations have also paid us a visit, but they have brought very few furs. The Holidays were spent as usual in dissipation & enjoyment, intermixed with quarreling and fighting—the certain consequences of intoxication among the men. On the night of the 16th Baitteau arrived from the English River with letters from Messrs. Fraser & McTavish.¹ Things in that quarter go on in the usual peaceable manner, for the Posts to the Northward are not subject to any sudden or unexpected revolutions from the nature of the Country and its inhabitants.²

27th—The Strong wood Assiniboines arrived from their Pound in all 17 men and traded about 300 Skins, 2300 lb Pounded Meat with a large quantity of Grease.—

¹ *The Arrangments of Proprietors, clerks, interpreters . . . of the North West Company, 1799*, places Donald McTavish and Alexander Fraser in the Upper and Lower English River Departments. See p. 53.

² See Thompson's *Narrative* quoted on p. lxix.

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The men still employed carrying home meat from the Hunters Tent. The French Hunters are now returned to the fort and Two of the Indians have forsook us: we have therefore only the *Gun Case* and *Marching Wolf* employed in hunting and a sufficient number of animals will I hope soon be killed for the Spring.— We have finished a *Glaciere*¹ containing 500 Thighs & Shoulders for the consumption of April & beginning of May, hoping by this means to preserve the Meat from spoiling in the warm Season.— This Winter is unusually severe; there is now a great quantity of Snow upon the Ground from which our *connoisseurs* prognosticate an overflow of the River in the Spring. This day the weather is so extreemly cold that a man has been frost bit going for Water.— We are almost suffocated with Smoke, which is condensed the moment it issues out of the Chimnies & rolls down the Houses into the Fort, a convincing proof of the cold state of the atmosphere. The Gun Case Arrived to inform us that he has killed 24 Buffalos.

31st Janry.—Some Blood Indians who arrived yesterday at the English House, traded about 40 Wolves here. Upon examining the Warehouses it appears that our trade amounts to 112 Bales, Besides Bear Skins, Kitts &c. 8900 lb Pounded meat with at least a sufficient quantity of fat to employ it, so that however difficient we may be in Packs at the embarkation, there is every appearance that the quantity of provisions will answer the expectations of the Gentn. of the Northern Posts, who depend on us for this necessary article. The Men are employed squaring and sawing wood to make 5 Boats in the Spring for the purpose of conveying the *Pimitigan*² to Cumberland House for the Water is generally

¹ Ice-house.

² Pemmican.

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too low in that season, that no vehicle can proceed from this with half loading. By a recapitulation taken this day we are sorry to observe that Goods will probably be scarce for the Spring hunt, particularly as we expect another demand from Mr. Finlay p. return of express. Mr. Shaw has therefore resolved to request a supply from Mr. McTavish at Lac Verd,¹ and the people wait only the arrival of Mr. Hughes who is daily expected to sett off for that place.

Febry. 4th 1795.—In the morning 5 lodges of Crees arrived; this small Band belongs to the lower Department from whence [they] came up last summer:—they are an useless indolent tribe and such pitifull Hunters that they Brought but 15 Skins in all to the Fort, for which reason they are treated with such indifference and contempt, that they resolve to return to their own lands, where they pretend to have been accustomed to receive a better reception. They sold all their Lodges and most of their Horses to procure a little Rum.— We anxiously expect the arrival of Mr. Hughes, the season being far advanced to perform a journey to the English River, the people of which are detained to carry the news of the Lower Fort des Prairies.

Febry 9th.—Baitteau with 4 of our men sett off for Lac Verd, it being impossible to detain them any longer for the Express,— At night a grand River Assiniboine Cheif with 8 women arrived from their pound with about 500 lb Pounded Meat. The weather is more moderate for some days past.— 11th.— The Express from the Lower Department is at last arrived without any

¹ Near Beaver River where it turns north to run to Isle à la Crosse. There was a winter express from the English River Department to the Fort des Prairies reporting the amount of pemmican needed for the forts and to take their brigade and that of Athabasca as far as Cumberland House; conversely Fort des Prairies made its call for goods from the English River, (Wm. M'Gillivray's *Journal* of 1793).

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accident after a disagreeable journey of 18 days; They suffered much from the severity of the weather having been forced to remain 3 days enveloped in their Robes under a wreath of snow to avoid the fury of a violent storm. These delays wasted their provisions and if Mr. Hughes [had] not killed some animals, they must have felt the effects of starvation. This Voyage has acquired him the reputation of being a vigorous walker.— The affairs of David Grant wear a very unfavorable aspect, which has induced him to make proposals of selling all his goods to Mr. Finlay for a certain number of Packs, these however were rejected in consequence of the arrangements made last year at Montreal by Messrs. Gregory & Robinson, respecting these goods: for it was apprehended that the purchasing of Davids goods, however cheap, might interfere with the decision of a court of justice in case a process has been commenced for his breach of last years agreement.— The Hunters have only 15 more animals to kill to complete our compliment 'till the embarkation.— The Two Hearts a Cheif of the lower posts Crees has arrived, but having killed no Beaver he was as coldly received as the rest of that Band, and he has left the House with the same determination of returning to his own lands.— He reported that the Strong wood Assiniboines are working provisions. Mr. Finlays men who arrived with Mr. Hughes, sett off.

19th Feby.—The two remaining Hunters arrived in the afternoon and began to drink: by examining the Meat account it appears 413 animals have been carried this Winter to the Fort, but a sufficient quantity of Meat, Still remains to maintain us 'till the middle of May. Provisions are very expensive in this Department; the

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two Hunters have scarcely killed 200 Buffalos and their payment will amount to 7 or 800 Beavers, exclusive of the amunition they have already expended; And the expences of dry provisions may be averaged at the value of a Pack for 3 Bags of Pimitican; this article ought therefore to be considered as constituting a very considerable part of our returns, it being so very necessary to take out the Canoes of all the Posts on this side of Lake Bourbon including the English River and Athabaska.

22d.—Cloathed the Hunters, their women and Children. The Gauché & 3 young men arrived from the Beaver Hills with about 200 Beavers which they traded for Rum, Amunition and Tobacco.— The extraordinary quantity of Snow upon the Ground prevents the natives from pouring in upon us at this time according to custom, they being at too great a distance to travel *en famille* 'till the snow is dissolved; we can only therefore expect to see a few drunken Stragglers (whose impatience to drink is too great not to be satisfied sooner) 'till the latter end of March, when all the nations will come in together, or near the same time, so that the Indians will only make one Hunt this year.— 28th Febry.—The Bel Homme and Son arrived yesterday with about 80 Beavers.—The old man made a present of 40 for which he received a large Keg & cloathing, which he says will be the last that ever he'll purchase as he intends to resign his place and authority to his Oldest Son.— The amount of our trade is as follows—118 Bales, 10,000 lb Pounded Meat, Grease, Bear Skins &c and the Indians owe about 20 Packs of Credits since the Fall. The men are commanded to fell and square 3 logs of timber of certain dimensions each to Build a Block House in the

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Spring which is much wanted to beautify and defend the Fort.— The most general news among the natives at present is.—that the Coutonées¹ a tribe from the Southwest are determined to force their way this year to the Fort or perish in the attempt: rumour reports that their Cheif has got a parchment Roll written by the Spaniards to the traders of this quarter, the contents of which are unknown.— The Gens du Large and all the other nations in this neighbourhood wishing to retain an exclusive trade among themselves, have hitherto prevented the Intentions of this Band, of commencing a friendly intercourse with the Fort, in order to exclude them from any share of our commodities, which they are well aware would put their enemies in a condition to defend themselves, from the attacks of those who are already acquainted with the use of arms.— The Coutonées have already made several attempts to visit us, but they have been always obstructed by their enemies and forced to relinquish their design with loss:—this year however it is reported that they intend obtaining a safe passage hither by bribing their enemies with Bands of Horses. Whether this method will succeed we cannot judge, but it is shrewdly suspected that a party will be formed to intercept as usual their progress to this quarter. It is also rumoured that 2 lodges of *Gros Ventres* are arrived at the Blackfeet Camp, deputed by the rest of that tribe to obtain peace of us and our Allies, that a regular communication to the Fort may be once more established, which they are said to wish for in great eagerness, the Booty which they have plundered from the H : B : Company being now almost expended. It is rather unaccountable that notwithstanding all their late depredations

¹ Kutenais; see p. lxviii and p. lxxviii.

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on our neighbours, Mr. Tomison seems to entertain but little resentment for those acts of barbarity and injustice, which they have committed on various occasions, against the Interest of his employers, for he has confessed this winter that He would not proceed to extremities were they to visit the Fort.—This benevolence might merit praise if it proceeded from a precept enjoined on us by Scripture, but *to do good for evil* is a maxim which constitutes no part of his composition, which may be proved by the general tenor of his actions and character in this Country. But whatever reasons have prevailed on him, to deviate from his usual vindictive remembrance of injuries, on this occasion; it is certain that their conduct deserves severe punishment by the laws of every nation, and it is an universal maxim among Savages that Blood must pay for Blood.—Their intentions towards us have been no better than to the English, but there attempts to our prejudice have fortunately proved less successfull. The Murder of old *Minard* is amply revenged (if it has been committed by them which is only suspected) by the death of 5 Gros Ventres killed at Pine Island & S. Branch so that it only remains for us to recover the value of the horses and baggage, which they have pillaged at those places.

We have had several quarrels with our neighbours this winter in which we have always come off victorious; this they attribute to our Superior numbers, which objection will be done away in the Spring, when all our differences will probably be decided by a general battle with equal numbers.—4 days ago two men arrived from Lac Verd for the purpose of taking down some grease by the Beaver River as soon as the communication will be open. A supply of this kind is yearly sent to the

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E. R. it being a scarce article at that place. The poor fellows are reduced to Skeletons by extreeme famine :—after having fasted 3 days they were forced to kill a Dog, which afforded them some releif, and for 10 days longer they supported themselves by eating their shoes and dressed Skins :—at length being entirely exhausted by hunger and fatigue they abandoned themselves to dispair, when fortunately they received assistance from some Crees who happened to pass that way.—They met our men going for goods to Lac Verd.

March 4th 1795.—This morning an unexpected express arrived from Mr. Finlay, in consequence of his having received letters from the Red River and the intermediate Posts. Our accounts from thence are very unfavorable in every respect. We are sorry to learn that Mr. Cuthbert Grant has been confined to his bed for near two months, before the date of his letter, which he has written with much difficulty. His Department is entirely ruined by different interests :—his opponents this year are very numerous having no less than 14 Forts to oppose, which with 7 belonging to the Company amounts in all to 21 forts in R. R. Peter Grant with 4 Canoes, and the H. B. Company with 5 Boats have entered there last Fall,¹ as also an adventure of 17 Canoes by Michilimachinac, some of which it is suspected are destined for Fort des Prairies next summer there being so little appearance of making returns, that a considerable quantity of goods will remain for that purpose.— Mr.

¹ John McDonnell says that Cuthbert Grant's favourite residence was on the Assiniboine at River *Tremblante* in a region which furnished most of the beaver and otter in the Red River returns, and that the H. B. Co. came in by way of Swan River, taking the goods across to the Assiniboine on pack horses. They thus got in a month earlier than the N. W. Co., and had all the trade. M'Gillivray's statement fixes the date at 1794. (Journal in Masson's *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-ouest*, I, p. 275). For Cuthbert Grant and Peter Grant see Coues, *New Light on The Early History of the Greater Northwest* I, p. 80.

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Thorburn¹ we understand enjoys but a bad state of health, since his return to the N.W.:— his expectations of returns are also very vague and uncertain.—Notwithstanding this deluge of disagreeable news, we receive some comfort from our accounts respecting the Grants, whose ambition will probably receive such a Check this year that they will never attempt another Campaign against the North West Company. In the Lower Department of the River David has hitherto made but 15 Packs, Mr. Finlay 115 & the H.B: Company 7 or 8.— He is said to be quite distracted at the confused state of his affairs, having no person in his service in whom he can place any confidence, his interpreters and most of his men being composed of Rascals who have formerly been expelled the Country for misconduct, it cannot therefore be expected that people of this disposition will exert themselves with fidelity or honor in the service of their employers. Sometime before the Holidays David received accounts that Roy his representative at Nepawi, being entirely addicted to drinking, squandered away the Goods with great profusion to his companions and favorites :—upon this he resolved to visit that place to remonstrate with Roy for his bad conduct, leaving Dumay to superintend affairs at Sturgeon Fort in his absense.—Dumay did not long enjoy this situation, for *La Verdure* an old offender, usurped his authority; deprived him of the Keys, and became master of the Goods and before Mr. Grant could be apprized of this revolution he expended 7 or 8 Kegs H.Ws. in company with Some of our People, whom he generally invited to partake of His liberality.—In short Davids situation is

¹ His fort, Esperance, was on the Qu'Appelle R. It was visited by David Thompson in 1797. Thompson *Narrative*, ed. by J. B. Tyrrell, (p. lxxiv, and p. 206).

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as dissagreeable as can well be imagined; his men dissobey and desert him; his goods are lavished away in his absence; and his mind so perplexed and confused that the men suppose—*qu'il a perdu l'esprit*, according to their own phrase.

8th March.—Our men arrived from Lac Verd with the following goods vizt—5 Kegs Hws, 50 lb assorted Kettles, 20 Small axes, 1 Gro : Scalping knives, some peices of gartering and a few other articles, which will be a seasonable supply for the Spring trade, as Mr. Finlays demands on us have dissassorted our goods.—Nothing material has transpired in that quarter since the last express, but [it] is with concern we learn from Mr. McTavish that they are in a starving condition at Lac Verd, the men being forced to pick up the fish Bones which they threw out last Fall to prolong their miserable existance.—12th March.—This morning a young boy, who for some time Past labored under an internal disease departed this life :—his mother is disconsolate : she laments his loss with the most violent signs of affliction and sorrow accompanied with plentiful showers of tears, which the natives of this country have always at command.—But this woman who entertained such affection and tenderness for her son, and indulges such extreme greif for his death, beheld her husband last Fall cruelly stabbed to the heart without any extraordinary emotion or regret : and so unconcerned was she at that event, that the night on which it happened she resigned herself in marriage, to a *Canadian* with whom she has lived since that time.—Indeed from the barbarous treatment of women among the Savages of this Country, it can scarcely be expected that they should have any great degree of affection towards their tyrants, or that they should be

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much affected at their death, especially as the Widow enjoys a much greater degree of freedom than the married woman notwithstanding the intercourse between the sexes is not much restrained; besides, if the former is inclined to enter again into the matrimonial state, she may choose for herself & select for a Partner the man whom her heart prefers.—at any rate her usefulness in managing the domestic affairs and performing every other drudgery to which her condition subjects her, will be sufficient recommendation to procure her a husband whenever she desires it.—After the child was interred, his mother pretended to have been visited by the Ghost of her deceased husband, who expressed a great desire of drinking Rum and commanded her to procure him some.—She accordingly demanded a gallon Keg of her present husband, to sacrifice to his manes, that the ghost might rest in peace in the *land of Spirits* :—Whether this scene passed in her troubled imagination or was invented merely to satisfy her own appetite for Rum, we know not, however her husband thought proper to grant her request on this occasion, thinking it would in some measure abate her greif, but instead of applying it to the pious purpose for which it was given her, She very deliberately conveyed a pot of it to her mouth; fixed her eyes on the roof of the House in an extacy and emptied it to the Bottom :—She returned again to the charge without loss of time, and soon lost remembrance of the death of her son in a fit of drunken clamour.—It is now confidently reported that the Gros Ventres will certainly visit us in the spring.—Mr. Shaw has therefore sent them word p. the Blackfeet to depute a few old men before the Band to settle the articles of peace. Having often had occasion in the course of this journal to mention

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our quarrels with this tribe, it will not I think be improper to give you a breif account of the origin of our present animosity which will cast a light on their subsequent actions to this time.

The Clans which inhabit this part of the Country are continually [at] variance with each other :—this cheifly arises from a disposition to plunder and pillage, which a Savage can Seldom resist when he can flatter himself with any hopes of success :—these mutual incursions rouse the resentment of the parties concerned and they prosecute their quarrels with all the animosity and fury which can animate the hearts of barbarians. Tho' the numbers that compose a tribe live seldom in harmony among themselves, yet they never fail to unite against a common enemy, and when an opportunity offers of annoying a neighbouring nation, without incurring much danger, they generally embrace it, whether the provocation be recent or not.—The Crees being the most powerfull clan in this quarter, have been involved in frequent quarrels with the Gros Ventres for many years past, but as they mutually feared each other their hostilities amounted only to the death of a few of either party, when they occasionally met at the Fort, 'till summer -93.—It happened at that time that a band of Gros Ventres consisting of 16 lodges was discovered near South Branch by a party of Crees, who immediately resolved to revenge all their former injuries, by exterminating entirely those unfortunate wretches.—For this purpose they watched their opportunity and when the others were retired to rest unsuspecting of danger, they fell upon them like hungry Wolves and with remorseless fury butchered them all in cold blood except a few children whom they preserved for Slaves. This horrible action struck the

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remaining Gros Ventres with such terror, and encreased their former dread of the Crees so much, that they did not dare to undertake an expedition against them being generally under cover of the Strong wood, which all the meadow Indians regard as the greatest advantage in possession of their enemies and consequently avoid it as their mortal foe in their hostile excursions.—Tho' a Savage is naturally vindictive and would undergo every hardship and fatigue to revenge an injury yet he seldom endangers his own safety by rushing headlong into danger. He watches the motions of his enemy for many days with the most astonishing patience, and if he cannot attack without risking his own life he restrains his resentment 'till another occasion.—The Gros Ventres being intimidated from attempting any speedy revenge upon the Crees, formed the design of attacking us, whom they considered as the allies of their enemies. For this purpose a Strong party endeavoured to plunder Pine Island Fort the ensuing Winter, but the attempt was fortunately unsuccessfull so far as regards the Company's property, and the horses and baggage they pillaged from the Men was bought by the blood of four Savages who afterwards died of the wounds they received on this occasion. They attacked the English Fort at this time and and plundered it compleatly, destroying what they could not conveniently carry away, and if the people had not luckily saved themselves by flight, they would certainly have fallen victims to the merciless rage of the savages. Instigated by revenge for this unexpected loss, they resolved to destroy entirely the Fort at South Branch last summer as already mentioned, expecting to find but little resistance from the few men at that place; but the spirited behaviour of our People in their own defence

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rendered the attempt abortive and compelled the enemy to relinquish their enterprize with the loss of their leader. The H : B : Company was still more unfortunate here than at Pine Island :—their men were cruelly massacred; their goods plundered; and their Fort rased to the ground, without the least provocation, by a Band of Blood-thirsty Savages, who were excited to such cruelties only by the love of Plunder and the ferocity natural to their tempers.—These repeated depredations on us and our neighbours, clearly testify the badness of their intentions towards us, and if their present entreaties for peace be sincere (of which we are not hitherto convinced) it is not a sense of their own worthlessness or change of opinion regarding us that excite these pacific sentiments :—They are attached to our commodities and experience has taught them that we are not to be pillaged with impunity, they therefore consider that the only method of procuring their necessaries is by a regular and peaceable trade such as was formerly maintained; and since it is not our interest or inclination to estrange any tribe of Indians entirely from the Fort, by an overacted severity, it is to be hoped that our differences will be brought to a happy termination, in the course of the Spring; at the same time it is necessary to resent every injury with proper spirit and resolution in order to guard our own rights and maintain a respectable character among our warlike neighbours, but if Mr. Tomison can forgive without Blood-shed the cruelty and rapacity of the *G. Ventres* on the preceding occasions, we may surely content ourselves with the restitution of the property which our people lost in the attacks of this daring tribe.—

That our opponents are more subject to the sudden incursions of the Natives than we are is obvious from the

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small number of Men they can spare to defend their Forts in the Summer, when the Indians are generally inclined to plunder, what their poverty precludes them from purchasing in the usual way; for according to their own expression they are always pitifull in that season, from the difficulty of hunting Beaver, and sometimes a scarcity of Goods, and in a County where the licentiousness of the inhabitants is not restrained by the hand of Justice, it is natural to suppose that the weak are exposed to the insults and depredations of the Strong and he who cannot defend his own property is regarded as a fit object for plunder by his neighbours. The unfavourable appearance of things in this quarter last spring obliged Mr. Tomison to lessen the compliment of Men required for his canoes in order to leave 8 men in land, who receiving accounts of the unhappy fate of their fellow servants at S. Branch abandoned their Fort and took refuge within our piquets, being convinced of their own incapacity to repel an attack from the enemy who was then supposed to be hovering near watching an opportunity to destroy them. This dissadvantage (of being exposed to the attacks of the Natives) will not be easily surmounted by the H. B. Company, who, having some trouble in procuring a sufficient number of men for the purpose of navigation, will find it very difficult to increase that number so considerably as to afford men enough for defending the Fort During the absence of the Canoes.— Methinks that this consideration alone might have some influence with the Hudsons Bay Company to induce them to adopt some terms of agreement with the North West Co. who are so well supplied in this respect, that last year Mr. Shaw left 24 Men inland without diminishing the usual number p Canoe, and I imagine that the

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latter would not be averse to some kind of union from a conviction of its general utility to both parties; indeed the mutual advantages that would arise from it, are so evident that they will naturally occur to every person who has any knowledge of this Country, it would therefore be superfluous to point them out to you, who are so well acquainted with all the Branches of the Fur Trade.

22nd March.—An accident happened this morning which has again renewed our intercourse with our neighbours :—retiring from breakfast we were alarmed with a sudden cry of fire ! and rushing immediately out we perceived clouds of smoke ascending from the English House; forgetting at that instant our former animosity we obeyed the dictates of humanity by running to their assistance & the Fire, after having consumed part of the roof, was happily extinguished. Soon after, we received a letter of thanks and an invitation to pass the evening at Mr. Tomisons, where all our differences were accommodated over a dish of tea, whilst the Canadians and his men diverted themselves with dancing and drinking plentiful draughts of what they called delicious punch.—Our men behaved themselves genteely enough during the visit, but they no sooner returned home than their usual propensity to quarrel began to appear and they soon made ample amends for their former forbearance by dusting each others Jackets 'till their intoxication subsided.—The weather is unusually cold for this time of the year and the snow, which is generally dissolved earlier than this period, is hitherto entire.

April 1st.—I have late last night returned from a hunting party across the River consisting of Messrs. Shaw, McDonald, 12 men and myself all mounted on horseback. We unluckily chose a very unfavorable day

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for this expedition, for about an hour after our departure the weather became boisterous and overcast, this was soon followed by Showers of Hail and Snow, which continued to fall without intermission 'till this morning.—This circumstance was of little consequence in itself as we are well accustomed to the changes & severity of the weather, but it incomoded us in other respects by obstructing our vision, which made it difficult to find Buffaloes, and rendering our fire arms almost unfit for use. Under these dissadvantages it can scarcely be supposed that we could kill in proportion to the number of Cavaliers, especially as most of them were, like myself, novices at this exercise. Hunting is the only amusement which this Country affords and we enjoy it in the most extensive sense of the word. In our vacations from business we fly to it with impatience to pass a few agreeable hours and when we are successfull it gives us satisfaction, to think that we have united pleasure and profit together, as we depend entirely for subsistence, on the animals arround the Fort; besides from the nature of the Country & quantity of animal food which we devour, I am persuaded that violent exercise is very necessary for the preservation of the constitution and no pastime whatever is better calculated to promote health and inure the Body to the hardships & fatigues which we are often forced to undergo, than the chace.

The weather is unusually severe this Spring, and the Snow, which is generally dissolved about the middle of March, is hitherto entire and covered with a hard crust, which the heat of the sun has not yet been able to penetrate.—In Short all the oldest voyageurs agree that this is the latest season in their memory;—a circumstance which some people ascribe to a curious phenomenon,

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which has frequently appeared in the Heavens for some-time past. The most remarkable one of this kind was observed on the 27 Febry about noon, when the firmament arround the sun was beautifully adorned with several circles of the colour of the Rainbow, intersecting each other in a curious manner :—Parallel to the horizon was a large circle passing through the Centre of the sun and containing four luminous bodies resembling it :—Two of these (one on each side of the sun) were intersected by a beautiful circle described round the sun as a centre and extending from the Horizon almost to the Zenith; and several other circles and semicircles were curiously disposed of in the several parts of the Southern Hemisphere. This appearance continued for near the Space of an hour & afterwards vanished away gradually.—Among many constructions put upon this wonderfull phenomenon, a few Canadians who are still attached to their Mother country make it ominous of the present situation of France.—for as the sun has dispersed and outshone these other luminaries, which seemed to rival it in brightness, so in like manner (they fondly presage) will France after a long struggle overcome and triumph over all her enemies.—For my own part I leave it entirely to those who can account for it in a more satisfactory manner than this, as it is probable that it has been observed at some other part of the Globe, where the operations of nature are more minutely remarked.—This severity of the weather has entirely deranged the usual time of trading with the Natives inasmuch as the quantity of Snow upon the ground has prevented them from coming to the Fort about the latter end of Febry or beginning of March, as they generally do with their Winter Hunt, when the season is favorable, and afterwards

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return with another considerable Hunt towards the time of embarkation; but this year they will Only make one hunt altogether, and that (we hear) is very trifling, so that at present the appearances of making good returns are very unfavorable.—We had, this time last year, about 300 Packs, but at present the warehouse scarcely contains half of that number: we shall however furnish a greater quantity of provisions this year than at any former period.

April 9th.—The Weather is now become milder & consequently the Snow begins to dissolve, but it is still disagreeable and changeable; the night generally produces some snow which is thawed by the heat of the Sun next day :—The Indians now begin to approach the Fort from Various directions, that they may once more pay their devotions at the shrine of Bacchus and drown all their cares with plentiful draughts of their favorite beverage, Rum;—This morning a Band of about 30 Blood Indians and 10 Black feet arrived: they have carried all their commodities on dogs. their horses being too much exhausted by hunger to undergo the fatigues of the Journey.—They all confirm the former rumours that the *Gros Ventres* are separated in Two Bands, one of which consisting of 90 lodges direct their course towards this quarter, and the other have formed an alliance with the *Snake Indians*,—a tribe who inhabit the Rocky Mountains, unacquainted with the productions of Europe, and strangers to those who convey them to this Country. The Snake Indians have suffered a severe loss in War this year if rumour be true, a party of the two first mentioned tribes having killed no less than 25 men and two Women in a recent expedition against them ;—it is however shrewdly suspected that this report is either entirely

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false or that the number is much exaggerated, and what makes this conjecture more probable is that the natives in general are so addicted to lying, that little of what they say relating to themselves deserves any credit.—They are some times incited to invent, by a prospect of reward for any interesting piece of news which they communicate; at other times they advance a falsehood in order to increase their own importance by recounting some Warlike exploit performed by themselves or their relations : in short they are always inclined to impose upon the credulity of their neighbours when they can hope for any benefit or advantage from it. Notwithstanding this vice is so prevalent among all the Indians, it is rather remarkable that they cannot forgive it in Strangers. When a White Man is once detected in a lie they never believe him afterwards :—he is despised & neglected and subject to be insulted on every occasion for having once deviated from truth whilst his accusers themselves practice every species of deceit, without any shame or regret.

April 11th.—At noon 4 *Circees* & 3 Piegans arrived with a few Wolves :—soon after 3 Canoe Assiniboines, entered the South gate amidst several discharges of guns, whilst 2 Grand River Assiniboine Cheifs and a few young men came in by the North gate. At night it rained very hard for the Space of 3 Hours which had a good effect in carrying of the snow.—It is reported the Gros Blanc will not come to the Fort this Spring, but designs to attack us in the Summer :—we have every reason to believe this report to be ill founded, not from a conviction of the goodness of his intentions, but from the difficulty attending such an attempt.

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12th.—After Breakfast we took a ride by the English House and met *Boucher* the Guide, the *Seauteau* who accompanied us hither last Fall, and 3 Crees coming to the Fort. The two former have passed the Winter in the meadows where they have killed about 150 Beavers each. In the afternoon 3 *Strong wood Assiniboines* arrived from the *Stars Buffalo Pound*:—near the same time departed the Canoe Assiniboines from both Forts.—At the distance of a few acres in a little creek they met a few men of their own Nation coming to the Fort and being well supplied with Rum, invited them to partake of a dram, and plyed them so fast that they soon became intoxicated, which produced the usual effect upon their fiery tempers. A young man for some provocation belaboured the wife of his neighbour with a cudgel. She complained of this outrage to her Husband and reproached him that he was unable to protect her against the insults of others. Offended at this remark and instigated by revenge for a former injury he quarreled the young man and after a Short altercation snatched up his Gun and Shot him through the heart. The relations of the deceased being unprovided with Arms could not take an immediate revenge, but they are determined to embrace the first opportunity of doing it.—they seem careless of existence and say “they have thrown away their bodies” untill his manes be satisfied by the Blood of his enemy.—This incident will certainly cause much cruelty and bloodshed to the friends of both Parties, as quarrels of this nature are prosecuted with such hatred and animosity that one life must pay for another without end:—and this Small tribe tho’ formidable to their neighbours, from their known wickedness and courage will soon be destroyed by internal masacres:—a circumstance

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which will greatly affect the trade of this quarter, the Canoe Assiniboines being little inferior to the Crees for Beaver hunting.—It being too late to dig a grave, after we received this information, I went with a few men to secure the body from Beasts of Prey during the night, and next morning he was interred without any other ceremony than killing a horse upon his grave to run the Buffalo in the land of Spirits.

15th April.—During 3 days past Indians are pouring in continually from all quarters. There are no less than 7 different nations at the Fort :—such an assemblage of Strangers, who are in general inveterate enemies and ignorant of every language except their own, must exhibit some curious scenes, when their minds are expanded with liquor, but whatever motives of enmity influence their actions, they seem all to agree in one measure which is to get heartily drunk. They form intertaining groups around their fires and pledge each other with a degree of satisfaction, which seems to be increased in proportion to the time they have been deprived of Rum. Men, Women and children, promiscuously mingle together and join in one diabolical clamour of singing, crying, fighting &c and to such excess do they indulge their love of drinking that all regard to decency or decorum is forgotten :—they expose themselves in the most indecent positions, leaving uncovered those parts which nature requires to be concealed. —a circumstance which they carefully avoid in their sober moments, and the intercourse between the sexes, at any time but little restrained, is now indulged with the greatest freedom, for as chastity is not deemed a virtue among the most of their tribes, they take very little pains to conceal their amours especially when they are heated with liquor.

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15th.—During 3 days past the Blackfeet arrive incessantly from the other side of the River in detached Bands so that there are now about 200 men between the 2 forts. Their Cheif the Gros Blanc remains behind this Spring, alledging that a late indisposition has made him incapable of hunting Wolves, without which he would appear pitifull at the Fort.—In a speech of considerable length which he sends Mr. Shaw he acquaints him, that tho' I have made him ashamed before strangers by offering him an insult which no man breathing ever dared to do before, yet he forgets that circumstance, and as a mark of his entire forgiveness, he adopts me, for his *little Brother* to replace a real one who has been killed last Summer in War by the Snake Indians. To revenge this loss he threatens an expedition against them and promises to bring a few of their Scalps to the Fort next Fall.—My quarrel with this Indian is therefore amicably settled, notwithstanding it once threatened me with dangerous consequences and I now find myself become a member of one of the most *honorable families* of the meadows. The Blackfeet have made no hunt this Winter having amused themselves with hunting Buffalos in the hunting season. They brought us in all about 500 Wolves and a small quantity of provisions, whereas last year at one trade they bartered near 3 times that number.—From what they relate respecting the *Gros Ventres* we have lost all hopes of seeing them this Spring. They are in the same dispositions as they were represented by our last accounts; that is, desirous of renewing their intercourse with us and our allies, but fearfull of a bad reception: for as they are naturally treacherous and vindictive themselves, it is reasonable to suppose that they suspect others of the same sentiments especially as they are

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conscious of having merited chastisement for their late depredations; and untill they can be assured that no violence is intended against them, at least as far as regards their persons I am affraid they will not be persuaded to visit us.

17th April.—Early in the morning dried the Pounded Meat in the sun and soon after made 200 *Bags Pimican*. At Noon a band of Crees arrived from the Beaver Hills and received a present of 2 Kegs Rum, and before night clothed the following Chiefs¹, who made presents of 40 Skins each—*Child of the Earth*, Tapistacawin Big Heads Son, Little Borgne and 5 or 6 others of less note.

20th.—The Crees traded and went off before noon. They brought upwards of 30 Packs of fine Beaver.—Men employed making Boats, mending the Canoes and making a Blockhouse for the defence of the Fort.—Our men for some time past have been pretty successful at the Fishery of Frog Lake.² We receive a few loads of very excellent fish every other day.—A Hunting Party returned from accross the River in the morning after an absence of 3 days, during which they loaded their Horses with Meat. They rode over the River with Safety and two hours thereafter the Ice broke up :—this happens much sooner than we expected from the lateness of the season when the Snow was finally dissolved. In the night the Ice being dammed at a small distance below the Fort, occasioned the Water to rise 12 feet perpendicular.

24th April.—Yesterday and this morning we made 180 Packs of 90 lb each, after which we were interrupted by the arrival of a large band of Indians consisting of

¹ This ceremony consisted in giving a coat, usually of calico, and other garments and a tall hat and a flag, the symbols of headship. Chiefs whose bands had been indolent and had not hunted and were not able to pay their credits were deprived of their position by withholding these symbols of office.

² Sixteen miles due east of Fort George; the scene of the massacre in 1885.

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Circees, Crees, Piegans and Blood Indians none of whom have come to the Fort since last Fall. Mr. Shaw made them a present of 3 Kegs Rum, separated in proportion to the number of men in each band, with which they were well satisfied. After they had indulged themselves with a few drams they began to make their presents according to custom, and before midnight we cloathed 22 Chiefs, a greater number than ever was cloathed before in one day at any settlement in the North West. The Crees are quite pitiful this Spring having amused themselves during the Winter with smoking & feasting along with the Piegans :—Their greatest Chiefs such as the *Gauché*, Sitting Badger, and french Bastard, have scarcely got a pack each : they are however well equipt for the Summer and they promise to be more industrious next year. The other Tribes have brought about 40 Packs consisting chiefly of Wolves, Kitts, Foxes &c and they are assured of receiving a pipe of Tobacco if they come to the Fort during the Summer.

26th April.—All the above mentioned Indians departed apparently well satisfied with their reception. The *English Indians* on the contrary complain bitterly of their treatment and threaten to return no more to that House.—Our neighbours are scarce of Goods this Spring, a circumstance which they have hitherto carefully concealed from the natives, but the demands made upon them at this time are so great that they could not supply them or satisfy the Indians in the usual manner. To increase this dissatisfaction and to make the contrast more glaring, we have been rather more lavish than usual and if we can place any reliance on their promises we shall find the good effects of it next year. We agreed with the Sitting Badger, Gun Case, and another Cree to

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hunt for the Fort during the summer. They are brave, resolute Indians and the most likely not to abandon us in danger, of any in the neighbourhood. The Expences of equipping the Natives this Spring are very considerable, as they have made but trifling hunts.—A Cree chief receives 80 or 100 Balls, 2 or 3 fms. Tobacco & many other articles, and if any of his demands are too unreasonable to be complied with, he immediately threatens to forsake the House. Such and many more are the consequences of different Interests.—It renders the Natives insolent and overbearing, being always certain of a good reception at one House, after receiving any punishment, however justly inflicted, at the other. In other respects an opposition makes them indolent and lazy, inasmuch as they procure their necessaries at such low prices, that very few skins are required to satisfy all their wants, and they receive besides very considerable presents either to debauch them or to insure a continuance of their Trade.

April 30th.—The Bel-homme and his family arrived. They have made no hunt this Spring, having enjoyed but a bad state of health for some time Past.—We have now seen all the Indians of this quarter except 7 or 8 Crees from the Br. River¹ who traded here last Fall, since which time we have received no accounts of them. They are supposed to have gone on a War excursion against the Athabaska Indians.

May 8th.—We are now busily employed making preparations for our departure, but the Badness of the season retards the repairing of the Canoes considerably which will detain us here, longer than we expected. All the men are now returned from the Meadows; they have Killed in all about 2,000 Beavers most of which are of the

¹ Beaver River.

FORT GEORGE, 1795

first quality. The Returns of this place are 325 Packs of 90 lb each and 300 Bags Pimican: and from a Recapitulation taken this day it appears that a large assortment of goods remains here for the Summer.

11th.—It is reported that a young Cree who has been insane for some years past has committed a most Shocking action a few days ago at the Br. Hills. He is charged with having murdered his Father, Brother and Mother ! after which he made his escape from the rest of his relations, in order to avoid a punishment which he richly deserves.

Mr. Shaw has projected a plan of erecting a House farther up the River, in course of the Summer. For this purpose Mr. Hughes has received directions to build, 12 or 14 days march from this by Water, on a spot called the Forks,¹ being the termination of an extensive plain contained between two Branches of this River. This is described to be a rich and plentiful Country, abounding with all kinds of animals especially Beavers & Otters, which are said to be so numerous that the Women & children kill them with Sticks and hatchets.—The Country arround Fort George is now entirely ruined. The Natives have already killed all the Beavers, to such a distance that they lose much time in coming to the House, during the Hunting Season. The Lower Fort will only therefore serve in future for the *Gens du Large*, whilst the Crees Assiniboines, and Circees, being the Principal Beaver Hunters will resort to the Forks.—This division of the Indians will be doubly advantageous to the Co, both with respect to augmenting the usual returns & taking the natives out of the reach of any

¹ The junction of the Saskatchewan and Sturgeon Rivers. This fort was called Fort Augustus. The H. B. Co. built Edmonton House beside it. These are to be distinguished from the forts of the same names built later on the site of the present Edmonton 30 miles farther up the river.

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opposition, (except the English) for the ensuing Winter at least :—Even the English themselves will labour under considerable dissadvantage, for the first year, with respect to every preparation necessary for the establishment of a Post, such as buildings &c, for it is carefully concealed from every person that a step of this kind is intended, and it is scarcely probable that any other party will be able to penetrate so far into the Country their first year, especially as they will have no early knowledge of the necessity of such a Step, to induce them to come in sooner than usual in the Fall.

The day of our departure being now at hand we indulge ourselves in all the amusements of this place—such as riding, hunting &c. —Yesterday morning a Band of near 40 Cavaliers issued out of the Fort and after having raced our Horses 'till they were quite exhausted we changed them for fresh ones at the Fort & fatigued them in the same manner. Bets ran high : Fathoms of Strouds & Scar[fs] and even horse against horse were often proposed and accepted by the men :—they are apprehensive that the Natives will steal them this Summer and are therefore resolved to enjoy them while they can.

14th May.—To-morrow is fixt for the day of our departure. The Canoes are loaded with 23 Packs and 2 Bags Pimican; and 3 large Boats have been built for transporting the Provisions to Cumberland House. It is confidently reported that a Cree has been Killed a few days ago at *Lac de Boeuf*¹, by the Fall Indians. This Circumstance renders our expectation for Peace very uncertain, but if our enemies are hostilely inclined during the Summer, we shall be able to give them a warm reception as Mr. McDonald Mr. Hughes & 24 men

¹ Buffalo Lake, to the south-west and beyond the Battle River. Its outlet is into the Red Deer River.

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remain in-land. Our neighbours the English can scarcely afford 8 men to guard their Fort in the Summer, so that if any depredations are premeditated by the *Gens du Large*; they will incur a greater degree of danger than our people.

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THE LAST OF FORT GEORGE AND DUNCAN M'GILLIVRAY

Duncan M'Gillivray's years in the North West coincide closely with the occupation of Fort George. That post was built in 1792 and we know of M'Gillivray's presence "in the Interior", at Fort George, and at Pine Island Fort, from 1793. We come upon them both from time to time up to the end of the century, and in the case of M'Gillivray a little beyond.

The entry in the *Journal* for May 11th, 1795, foreshadows a step towards change.

"Mr. Shaw has projected a plan of erecting a House farther up the River, in the course of the Summer. For this purpose Mr. Hughes has received directions to build 12 or 14 days march from this by water, on a spot called the Forks, being the termination of an extensive plain contained between two Branches of this River, [the Saskatchewan and the Sturgeon River]. This is described to be a rich and plentiful Country, abounding with all kinds of animals, especially Beavers & otters, which are said to be so numerous that the Women and Children kill them with sticks and hatchets. The Country around Fort George is now entirely ruined. The Natives have already killed all the Beavers, to such a distance that they lose much time in coming to the House during the Hunting Season. The Lower Fort will only therefore serve in future for the *Gens du Large*, whilst the Crees Assiniboines, and Circees, being the Principal Beaver Hunters will resort to the Forks. This division of the Indians will be

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doubly advantageous to the Co. both with respect to augmenting the usual returns & taking the natives out of the reach of any opposition, (except the English) for the ensuing Winter at least :—Even the English themselves will labour under considerable disadvantage, for the first year, with respect to every preparation necessary for the establishment of a Post, such as buildings &c., for it is carefully concealed from every person that a step of this kind is intended, and it is scarcely probable that any other party will be able to penetrate so far into the Country their first year, especially as they will have no early knowledge of the necessity of such a step, to induce them to come in sooner than usual in the Fall.”—

M'Gillivray later tells us that “Mr. McDonald, Mr. Hughes & 24 men remain inland”, doubtless to build the new post. It would appear from the autobiographical notes of John MacDonald of Garth, that the English under Tomison followed the Northwesters up the river in the autumn and built within “musket shots” of them. They called their post Edmonton House, the North West Co.'s fort being named Augustus, both at the Forks of the Sturgeon and Saskatchewan Rivers. (These posts are to be distinguished from the houses of the same names later built some thirty miles farther up the river on the site of the present city of Edmonton.) On the return of the brigade in the autumn MacDonald was ordered to join Mr. Hughes “at the Fort Augustus with a complement of men & goods for Trade”. MacDonald's account continues (p. 59) :

“When there appeared on the opposite (the South) side of the River a large Band of Indians with Horses in numbers, women & all other accompaniments [Sic.] Who were they was the question. We were not picketed, merely log Houses in a Square Shape with

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a gate between the two Houses. Shortly some chiefs came to the bank of the River & held a Parley, saying they came to sue for peace. They were the Mississouri Indians, who had nearly cut off Mr. Finlay & had destroyed the Hudson's bay establishment on Bow River—[South Saskatchewan]. The River was this [Saskatchewan] the ice good & they had [taken] precaution they might retreat safely.

The Hudson's Bay Fort, at the head was my old Friend Mr. Thompson [Tomison]. The forts were within musket shots of one another.

As we required all the help we could give one another Mr. Hughes & myself held a Council of war with Mr. Thompson [Tomison]. He told us that after destroying their establishment & killing their men—he could not receive them as friends.

Mr. Hughes and myself resolved that we stand, accordingly I took my best Horse, rode to their Camp & with an Interpreter told them of Mr. Thompson's [Tomison's] resolve. They loaded me with kindness & Buffaloe fur Robes—they had by this time pitched their tents. They told me they would willingly make peace & not molest the Hudson's Bay establisht,—but would trade all they had with me—& was glad that I met them without any fear of any harm—and I placed confidence in them.

They accordingly came on & we made a good Trade. Mr. Thompson [Tomison] biting his fingers at the result. He thought that they deserved not to be allowed to Trade—as a punishment—& I gained more of his ill-will, but I saved his life afterwards by seizing upon an Assiniboile's Gun, when in the act of shooting him."

Thus ended the feud between the North West Company and the Gros Ventres often referred to in the *Journal*. The traders would henceforth forget the

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attempts on Pine Island Fort, and the Post on the South Branch; the Indians would come peaceably to trade.

If we may trust the memory of John MacDonald of Garth, the stations of the partners in the years immediately subsequent were, one year (say 1796-7) MacDonald at Fort George and Shaw and M'Gillivray at Fort Augustus, and a subsequent year (say 1797-8) Shaw and M'Gillivray at Fort George and MacDonald and Hughes at Fort Augustus. MacDonald says of what appears to be the third year, but if we follow the chronology of David Thompson's itinerary it would be 1799 or 1800 :

“We had decided that we should abandon old Fort George & build about twenty miles farther up on a handsome Island.

“Consequently Mr. Decoigne made some progress in building & when Messrs. McGillivray and Hughes returned they found stores ready for the goods, the men had to put up their own Houses, six to a Mess.”

Apparently MacDonald and M'Gillivray spent this winter at the new fort, called from its position on “a handsome island”, doubtless for security sake, Fort de l'Isle. The island is indicated on the survey maps as “Fort Island”. M'Gillivray and MacDonald had now become partners in “the Concern”.

Thompson's itinerary now puts our account on a firmer basis. In the year 1799 that noted geographer passed through Isle à la Crosse, where he married Charlotte Small, 14 years of age, the half-breed daughter, no doubt, of Patrick Small, formerly a fur-trader in those parts. Thence he proceeded to the rendezvous at Grand Portage and returned with John MacDonald of Garth to Fort

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George, which he found in a ruinous condition. Here he spent the winter with his bride. He had brought with him the materials for that *magnum opus*, his map of the Territory traversed by the North West Company. Its superscription runs :

“This Map made for the North West Company in 1813 and 1814 and delivered to the Honorable William McGillivray then Agent, embraces the region lying between 45 and 60 degrees North Latitude and 84 and 124 degrees West Longitude comprising the Surveys and Discoveries of 20 years namely the Discovery and Survey of the Oregon Territory to the Pacific Ocean, the Survey of the Athabasca Lake, Slave River and Lake from which flows MacKenzies River to the Arctic Sea by Mr. Philip Turnor the route of Sir Alexander MacKenzie in 1792 down part of Frasers River together with the Survey of this River to the Pacific Ocean by the late John Stewart of the North West Company by David Thompson, Astronomer and Surveyor.

(Sgd.) DAVID THOMPSON.”

Though not mentioned, the survey of the Saskatchewan by himself is included. Ross Cox, who visited Fort William in 1816, gives us a glimpse of the map, which suggests that it played no small part in the yearly deliberations of the Company at the *rendezvous*.

“The dining hall is a noble apartment, and sufficiently capacious to entertain two hundred. A finely executed bust of the late Simon McTavish is placed in it, with portraits of various proprietors. A full-length likeness of Nelson, together with a splendid painting of the battle of the Nile, also decorate the walls, and were presented by the Hon. William M’Gillivray, to the Company. At the upper end of the hall there is a very large map of the Indian country, drawn with great accuracy by Mr. David

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Thompson, astronomer to the Company, and comprising all their trading-posts, from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific Ocean, and from Lake Superior to Athabasca and Great Slave Lake." (*The Columbia River*, Vol. 2, p. 252.)

This map is now one of the chief treasures of the Ontario Archives in Toronto. It is not without its interest to us that it was commenced in Fort George, now ruinous and about to be abandoned.

In the spring of 1800 Thompson rode from Fort George to Rocky Mountain House on the north bank of the Saskatchewan, $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles above the Clearwater River and three miles below Peter Pangman's tree. He tells us that this post had been built the autumn before. MacDonald claims the credit of establishing it, but the date he gives is 1802, and he puts it after M'Gillivray had left the country, at a time when he himself was "master of the largest department in the North" and in the year after the murder of Mr. King (which took place when MacDonald was at Fort de L'Isle in 1801.)

"1803.—I returned from Fort William in due time and I determined to build further up towards the Rocky Mountains in order to try and meet a new tribe of Natives, the Coutonais. But I find that I am twelve months before my time. However incorrect I may be as to time, circumstances are the same. This ought to be 1802."

One is afraid circumstances were not the same. Rather one is tempted to believe that MacDonald was claiming more than his due and that it was M'Gillivray or Shaw who built Rocky Mountain House. As the former was a partner and soon to go to Montreal to act as agent for the Company, the changes on the Upper Saskatchewan

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were probably due to his initiative. Be that as it may, Thompson's itinerary shows that the activity on the Upper Saskatchewan was great. We quote J. B. Tyrrell :

"1800 on May 5th he embarked at Rocky Mountain House on the North Saskatchewan river, and made a survey of it to "The Elbow". On May 7 he "found the English [Hudson's Bay Company] encamped for building" at the mouth of a creek flowing in from the right, which he calls Sturgeon Creek (Buck Lake Creek), and on the same evening he reached White Mud House, where a clerk named Hughes was in charge of the North West Company. This post was situated on the north bank in Section 30, Tp. 51, Range 2, west of the Fifth Meridian. On May 9 he reached Fort Augustus, and on May 12 Fort George, having passed a few miles above it what he designates as "Isle of Scotland, North West Company, 1800 and 1801", apparently the island now known as Fort island, in Section 12, Tp. 55, R. 2, west of the Fourth Meridian." (Thompson's *Narrative*, p. LXXIX.)

The week spent by Thompson at Fort George now was probably in the last summer of its occupation.

Fort de L'Isle as a substitute did not last long. When Thompson passed by in 1808 he called it "burnt Fort de L'Isle". The fort in these regions in actual occupation in 1808 was Fort Vermilion, opposite the mouth of the Vermilion River, under Alexander Henry the younger. Consequently our last word of Fort George is from Henry's *Journal*.

"(1809) Sep. 20, I sent men up to Fort George to raft down some stockades and other wood required for our repairs.

"Oct. 27. . . . passed the ruins of old Fort George, only the chimneys of which are now seen."

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All that can be seen to-day is a few cellars at the corner of a wheat field, and beside some of them heaps of mud and stones which mark the chimneys. Across the gully similar cellars and mounds deep in woods mark the site of Buckingham House. The gully lies between but with no trace of the well. A fine bank of woods stretches now as of yore many miles along the lordly river.

A summary of his movements written in Thompson's own hand says that in 1800 he proceeded to Grand Portage and returned to Rocky Mountain House, adding that "Mr. Duncan McGillivray came and wintered also, to prepare to cross the mountains". This indicates that the idea of crossing the Rockies was now broached, and that M'Gillivray, probably now head of the Department of Upper Forts des Prairies, was to carry it into effect.¹

Thompson's notes go but a short distance in suggesting M'Gillivray's movements. In October Thompson was up the Clearwater and returned to Rocky Mountain House with a band of Kutenais who were anxious to get into trading relations with the white men. Possibly it was during these weeks that M'Gillivray took the journey mentioned in the astronomer's note-book, and given by J. B. Tyrrell.

" . . . at first up the north side of the North Saskatchewan for eight miles, thence across country to Brazeau river and up it to Brazeau lake three miles beyond which he "proceeded to cross the chain of Mountains that separates the sources of the north Branch (Brazeau) and the Athabasca River." Continuing still farther westward, he travelled four

¹ Angus Shaw signed documents at the *Rendez-vous*, Grand Portage, on June 30, 1801, and none thereafter. Accordingly that was the year in which he passed down for good to Montreal, (*Minutes of N. W. Co.*, Public Archives of Canada).

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miles down a stream flowing into the Athabasca river, from which point he returned to Rocky Mountain House. His traverse is carefully laid down in Thompson's note-book." (*Narrative*, p. LXXXI.)

M'Gillivray must have turned at a point in the same latitude as the "height of land" of Athabasca Pass as given in David Thompson's map (see p. 11), but in the valley to the east about forty miles away. If he crossed the mountains the next year from this point, he would continue down the stream he was following till he would come to the present Whirlpool River. This he would ascend into the Athabaska Pass at whose height of land stood "M'Gillivray's Rock", to be mentioned below.

Another journey is given thus by Tyrrell :

"On November 17, accompanied by Duncan McGillivray and attended by four men, (Thompson) set out on horseback along the trail up Clearwater river, crossed Red Deer river, and reached Bow river at a point opposite to where the town of Calgary now stands, in latitude $50^{\circ} 2' 56'$ N., longitude $113^{\circ} 59'$ W. From here he surveyed the north-east side of the river down to a short distance below the bend, where he crossed it and went on to the Spitchee or Highwood river, which he reached two miles above its mouth. From here he turned a little west of south, and reached a camp of the Pikenows, or Piegan, in latitude $50^{\circ} 35' 30'$ N., probably on Tongue Flag Creek. After stopping here for a short time in order to establish friendly relations with these Indians, he turned North-westward and again reached Bow River at a point which he places in latitude $51^{\circ} 13' 57'$ N., longitude $114^{\circ} 48' 22'$ W., a short distance above the mouth of Ghost river. From here he followed the Bow river upwards, on its south bank for three miles, and then fording the

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stream he followed the trail on its north bank to the steep cliffs of the mountains near where the town of Exshaw is now situated.¹ Thence he returned to his old camp on the Bow River, and, crossing the stream, struck northward to Rocky Mountain House, which he reached on December 3."

¹" Near this point, McGillivray killed and preserved a mountain sheep, which about three years later formed the basis of three names—*Ovis canadensis* Shaw, *Ovis cervina* Desmarest, and belier de montagne of Geoffroy (later latinized as *Ovis montana* by Cuvier). Although wild sheep had long been known to inhabit North America, this specimen was the first to reach the hands of systematic naturalists."

ibid, pp. LXXXII.

Exshaw is given on our present maps as on the Bow River a little north of lat. 51° N. and West of long. 115°. It is about twenty miles from Banff. White Man Pass, about twenty-five miles to the Southwest, and Simpson Pass about the same distance to the west, cross the Rockies to the upland streams which form the Kootenay River, called by David Thompson, M'Gillivray's River. These journeys coming close up to the Rockies were doubtless intended to feel out points at which the proposed crossing of the range could be effected.

Did Duncan M'Gillivray, as he intended, cross the Rocky Mountains? There is some evidence in the place names used in the next score of years. Franchère, who passed through the Athabasca Pass on May 14th, 1814, describes an icy peak rising perpendicularly some fifteen or eighteen hundred feet above the level of the lakes on the height of land, and having its summit covered with ice. "Mr. J. Henry, who first discovered the pass, gave this extraordinary rock the name of M'Gillivray's Rock, in honour of one of the partners of the N. W. Company." (Huntington's translation of Franchère's *Narrative*, p. 291.)

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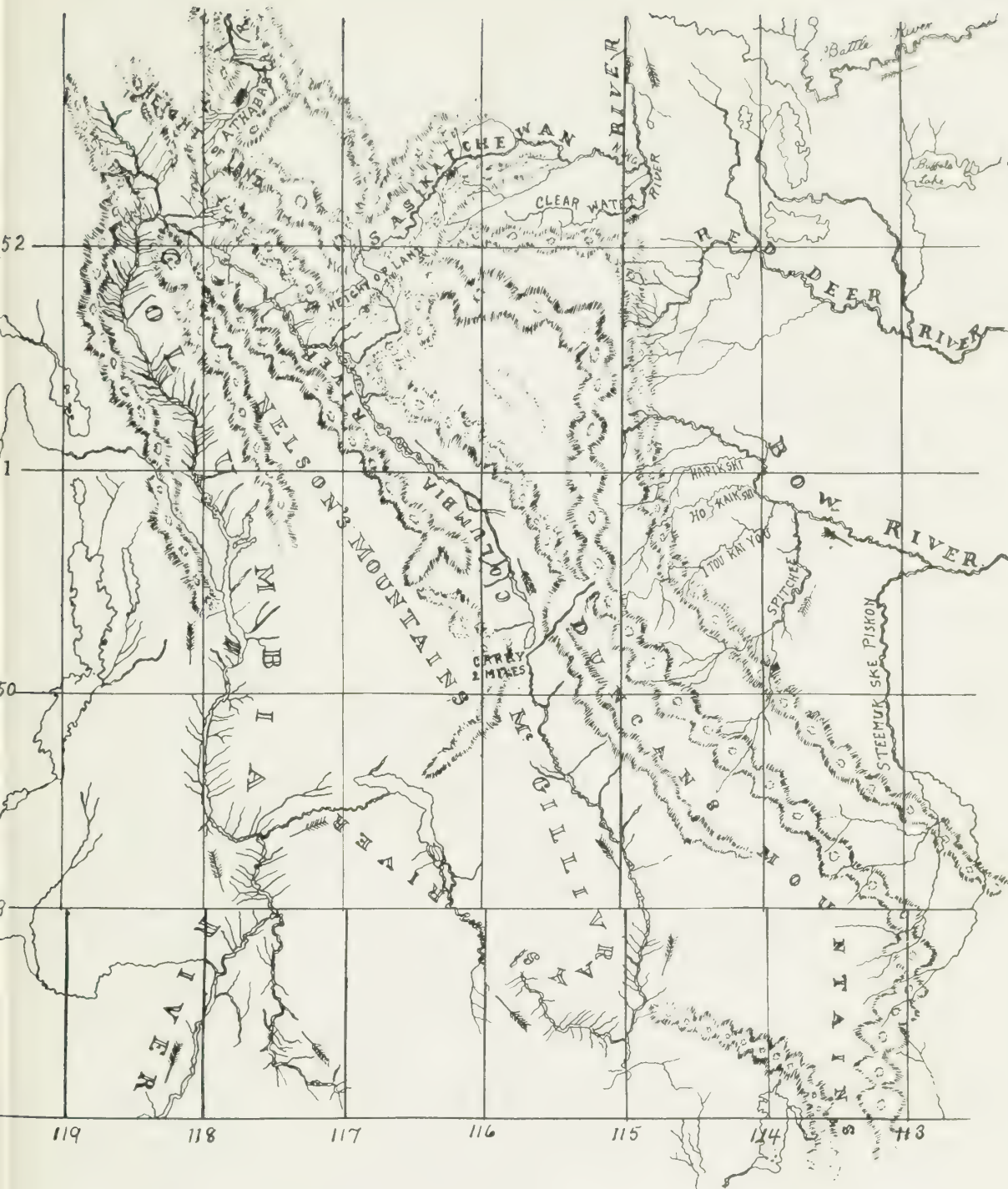
Ross Cox camped beneath the peak in 1816 and describes it, adding in a foot-note, "This is called M'Gillivray's Rock, in honour of the late Mr. Wm. M'Gillivray, a principal director of the Company." (*The Columbia River*, vol. 2, p. 166.)

The attribution of the name to William M'Gillivray is probably incorrect as he never had any connection with these parts, and the practice was to call places by the names of those who had to do with them, *e.g.*, MacKenzie's River, Fraser's River, Fort William (in a special sense the scene of William M'Gillivray's activity). Further, when David Thompson passed from Upper Columbia Lake at the source of the Columbia he crossed by what he calls "McGillivray's Portage" (given in his map as "carry, 2 miles") to the "Flat Bow" or "McGillivray's River". (1808). The river he so names in his map is the Kootenay, and the Rockies to the east he denominates "Duncans Mountains". These names are so many footprints of Duncan M'Gillivray, marking a journey of which we have no record, only the knowledge of his intention to cross the Mountains.

In a volume containing a manuscript *Journal of David Thompson* recently come to light and now in the Vancouver Public Library, is a long series of extracts from Vancouver's *Voyages* made by Duncan M'Gillivray (and copied by Thompson) with a view to his proposed crossing of the Rockies. The *Journal* itself records Thompson's vain attempt in the spring of 1801 to penetrate through the mountain mass by the valley of the Sheep River. Its contents were already known from the itinerary summarized by J. B. Tyrrell (p. lxxxi), but this new-found manuscript informs us that M'Gillivray himself was to have led the party and that Thompson

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was put in his place because his chief was sick. He was, however, well enough to attend to the details connected with the start of the expedition, and not so sick as to make it advisable to go down with the canoes to Grand Portage. The attempt failed because the river was in flood, with the spring freshet covering the lower banks by which they might have tracked upwards and reaching the containing precipices. By June 30 Thompson and his party were back at Rocky Mountain House. It seems fair to assume that M'Gillivray had recovered meanwhile and carried out his intention later, in the summer and the autumn, under more favourable conditions for travelling up-stream. Of this the sole documentary evidence remains in the names "Duncans Mountains" and "McGillivray's River" in Thompson's map, and the fact that in Thompson's Itinerary he calls the Kootenay-Columbia portage "McGillivray's Portage". While the mountain range and the mountain river might have been named simply in Duncan M'Gillivray's honour, though that was not the practice of the fur-traders of the day, Thompson's calling an insignificant portage "McGillivray's Portage" is definite evidence of his chief having crossed it. M'Gillivray, leaving Rocky Mountain House, must have entered the Rockies, here "Duncans Mountains", from the neighbourhood of Exshaw, reached the autumn before in his preliminary survey, and got over by the Kananaskis River and Pass or the White Man Pass, or, possibly, by Banff and the Simpson Pass, into the valley of the Kootenay, "McGillivray's River". On the return he must have crossed to the Upper Columbia Lake by "McGillivray's Portage" and so down the Columbia River to recross the mountains by the Athabasca Pass. At the height of land he may have camped under the august



Courtesy of The Champlain Society, Toronto

A PORTION OF DAVID THOMPSON'S MAP OF THE NORTH WEST,
TAKEN TO ILLUSTRATE THE FIRST EXPLORATION ACROSS THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

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shadow of "M'Gillivray's Rock". He would finally emerge in the immediate neighbourhood of the limit of his other preliminary exploration of the autumn before and follow his former steps back to Rocky Mountain House. Of course he may have completed the circle in the opposite direction. If this be so Duncan M'Gillivray crossed the Rockies into the Kootenay and Columbia valleys six years before David Thompson, their reputed explorer.

We can trace M'Gillivray's subsequent footsteps in the volume of photostat copies, in the Canadian Archives, bound as "Minutes of the North West Co." which really consists of a series of legal and binding agreements in relation to their business. There are two documents dated June 30, 1801, signed by the partners, including Angus Shaw as above, present at Grand Portage. Duncan M'Gillivray's name is not among them. He had, of course, remained inland that summer.

In the next year, 1802, M'Gillivray was at "Kaminitiquia", the new *rendez-vous*, soon to be called Fort William. The resolution appointing his chief, Angus Shaw, head of the King's Posts, recently purchased by the Company, headquarters to be at Quebec, was then passed and Duncan M'Gillivray signed in behalf of Alex. Fraser and Charles Chaboillez. Not only were Angus Shaw's wintering days over, but M'Gillivray's also. MacDonald's entry for 1802 runs :

"Mr. Duncan McGillivray being unwell left the country for Montreal, and there died after two or three years."

So far from being an invalid and dying in two or three short years, M'Gillivray was very much to the front for six

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years to come. He figures in a document drawn at "Kaminitiquia" on July 6, 1803, as a member of the firm of McTavish Frobisher & Co. (soon to become McTavish, McGillivrays & Co.) and on July 16 of that year signed an agreement next after William M'Gillivray, both as "Agents, N.W. Co." His signature is not found in the agreements of 1804, but he was present on July 6, 1805, when the Company passed a resolution empowering the Agents to make the proposal to the Hudson's Bay Co. for a Transit through Hudson's Bay and a post by the sea to be strictly used as a depot.

This negotiation is not without its relation to Duncan M'Gillivray's cherished plan to establish posts beyond the Rockies. In a manuscript, entitled *Some Account of the trade carried on by the North West Company*, probably written by M'Gillivray himself in his last days, it is said:

"The trade as it is carried on at present beyond the mountains, instead of getting any profit, is a very considerable loss to the Company; as the Furs did not pay for the transport to Montreal, where they were shipped."

The Company must have been aware of this when proposing to cross the Rockies, and would accordingly try to get facilities for shipping from Hudson Bay. The negotiation was conducted by Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Duncan M'Gillivray, but failed. Nevertheless, David Thompson, 1807, and Simon Fraser, 1808, were sent across to trade and explore. The proposal to have a depot on the Pacific Ocean is clearly envisaged in the pages of *Some Account of the trade carried on by the North West Company*, as the only way of making the trade in the valley of the Columbia a means of profit.

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During the years in which the North West Company was preparing the way to enter into the valley of the Columbia to possess it, Duncan M'Gillivray, wintering partner at Rocky Mountain House, and then Agent of the Company, seems to have been the presiding genius.

In Joseph Frobisher's *Journal* Duncan M'Gillivray figures at the dinner parties and as agent for the Company at the *rendez-vous* on Lake Superior. On Saturday, May 24, 1806, he dined at the Frobisher home, one of a party of fifteen. Eight days later we have the entry : "Duncan M'Gillivray sett off for the Portage", of course to act for McTavish, M'Gillivrays & Co. at the assembly of the Wintering Partners in July on Lake Superior. The agents were usually back in Montreal in the first week of September. Hence we are not surprised at Mr. Frobisher's entry for the 12th : "Dined at Hamilton's with Mr. D. M'Gillivray". Similarly in 1807 entries run :

"Saturday, May 30. Mr. Duncan McGillivray & Wells sett off for Kaministiquia.

Monday, September 7. Dined at Home, Company Wm. & D. McGillivray Capt. Henry."

Between the last two dates came M'Gillivray's last "voyage". Entries in Mr. Frobisher's *Journal* tell the rest of the tale.

"[1808] Saturday, April 9. Dined at Home. Mr. Duncan McGillivray Died this morning between the hour of one & two o'clock.

Sunday 10. Dined at Home. (The Body was opened.)"

The entries are such as one makes only of one's nearest friends.

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"Monday, 11. poor D. McGillivray was Buried at the Mountain in Mr. McTavish's Family vault.

Mr. McGillivray & Judge Reid	}	Mourners.
Frobisher & R. Mackenzie		
Fraser & Hallowell		
Todd & Ogden		
J. Reid & son		
B. Frobisher & Hallowell		
Henry & Chaboillez		
Caldwell & Jo. Frobisher		

Pothier, Blackwood, Wm. McKay	}	Pall
D. Mackenzie, Garde, Thain.		Bearers.

"Sunday, 17. Dined at home; the mourners and Pall Bearers attended at Church with Their Scarfs and Hat Bands after the Will was read at D. McGillivray's own House."

Thus Duncan M'Gillivray passes out of history.

The news of his death in the height of his manhood as it travelled brought out expressions here and there which help us to gauge the character of the man, or at least the hold he had on the affections of his friends. A writer in the *Quebec Gazette* of April 28, 1808, says:

.... "The loss of this young gentleman has caused a vacuity in the Society of this place, which cannot be easily filled, and is a source of unfeigned regret to all who knew him. To a vigorous and energetic mind and the keenest sensibility of honour, he added a reserved and modest deportment; which at once commended respect and conciliated esteem and affection."

Less elaborate but from the heart are the expressions on the lips of the wintering partners. At sunset on Monday, August 1, three young Indians, ten days from Lac la Pluie, *via* Reed Lake, put packets from Kaministiquia and Montreal into the hands of Alexander Henry,

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the younger, at Pembina River Post, Red River. Henry makes the entry in his Journal :

. . . . "The principal news was the death of our worthy friend, Duncan M'Gillivray, Esq., which occurred last spring in Montreal."

Forty-eight years had passed when John MacDonald of Garth wrote his Notes for his grandchildren; his last reference to Duncan M'Gillivray is :

"as fine a fellow as ever lived."

This esteem and even affection for Duncan M'Gillivray was what might be expected in his associates of the North West Company and in Montreal society in which the fur magnates played a conspicuous part. There is, however, evidence that another view may be taken of his character. Gros Blanc, the great Blackfoot chief, may have been the insolent, overbearing and violent savage described in the *Journal*, but M'Gillivray's story of the unnamed "indignity which he [Gros Blanc] will always remember with anger and resentment" offered him by the fur-trader in the Indian Hall at Fort George (p.45) suggests that some Indians there were who might have pictured Duncan to us in darker colours. Moreover, the jealous eye of Mr. Tomison watching the North-westerners from Buckingham House across the gully may have seen M'Gillivray in a light unknown to social circles in Montreal. The historian would welcome a sight of the journal which the Hudson's Bay factor sent home to the Committee in London of the proceedings on the Saskatchewan in the winter of 1794-5. Lord Selkirk, who was at pains to show that the ways of the partners of the North West Company in conducting their business among the Indians and half-breeds habituated them to deeds of violence such as they were perpetrating upon

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his Red River Colony devotes several pages of his *Sketch of the British Fur Trade* to Duncan M'Gillivray's methods of maintaining the supremacy of his Company when acting as their agent.

"In the year 1801,¹ Mr. Dominic Rousseau of Montreal, sent a canoe and four or five men, under the charge of Mr. Hervieu, his clerk, to Lake Superior, with an assortment of goods, calculating that he should dispose of them to advantage among the servants of the North-West Company, during their assemblage at the Grand Portage on Lake Superior. Small as this adventure was, it excited the jealousy of the North-West Company. Hervieu pitched his tent, and opened his shop, at the distance of about a gun-shot from their fort, or trading post; but it was not long before he was accosted by some of the partners, and particularly by Mr. Duncan M'Gillivray, who peremptorily ordered him to quit the place, telling him that he had no right to come there. Hervieu questioned the right of the North-West Company to the exclusive possession of the country, and said that he would not go away unless they shewed a legal title to the land. After some altercation, to avoid disputes, he agreed to remove his encampment to another spot, which was pointed out to him, but before he had time to effect this, Mr. M'Gillivray returned with Mr. Archibald Norman McLeod, another of the partners, and ten or a dozen of their inferior clerks and servants, and accosted him in a still more arrogant style than before. M'Gillivray, adverting to Hervieu having questioned the title of the North-West Company to the country, told him that he should see their title, and drawing his dagger, struck it

¹ The date should probably be 1802, when M'Gillivray had left "the interior" and when both he and the A. N. McLeod mentioned signed documents in July at Grand Portage, the *rendez-vous*.

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into Hervieu's tent, and tore it from top to bottom. M'Leod then pulled down the tent altogether; overturned a chest containing Hervieu's merchandize; with the most violent threats ordered him to be gone; and naming a place a little farther in the interior, told him, that if he were there he would cut his throat. The same gentleman assaulted Durang, an interpreter in the Company's service, and took from him a tent which he had purchased for his own use from Hervieu. With all the solemnity of a public execution, they cut it in pieces, and after publicly exhibiting it in this state, made a bonfire of it, as a warning to the servants of the Company of the consequence of purchasing from the intruder.

"In consequence of these outrages, Mr. Hervieu was under the necessity of returning to Montreal, a distance of thirteen or fourteen hundred miles, without having disposed of one-fourth part of his goods, for all of which he could have found a ready sale, if he had not been so molested. Indeed there was a considerable part of what he had sold which the purchasers refused to pay after they saw the manner in which he had been treated by their employers.

"Mr. Rousseau brought an action against Mr. M'Gillivray in the court at Montreal, and recovered damages which were assessed at £500; a sum which in all probability was barely sufficient (if it was sufficient) to compensate for the direct pecuniary loss which he had sustained. It could not possibly indemnify him for the profit which he had reason to expect, and was a mere trifle to the North West Company, in comparison with the benefit of maintaining their monopoly, and of deterring others from attempting a similar interference. In England a jury would hardly have overlooked that

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consideration, but in consequence of the French law, which still prevails in civil causes in Lower Canada, no jury was impanelled on this case, and the damages were assessed by the court.

“In the year 1806, Mr. Rousseau again attempted a trading adventure to the Indian country. He entered into partnership with a Mr. Delorme, whom he dispatched from Montreal with two canoes loaded with goods for the interior. Mr. Delorme proceeded as far as Lake Superior, and, in order to avoid collision, he there took the old route by the Grand Portage, which the North-West Company had then abandoned. When he had advanced a few days’ journey through the intricate and difficult country beyond Lake Superior, he was overtaken by Mr. Alexander M’Kay, a partner of the North-West Company, with a number of men, who went forward along the route by which Mr. Delorme was to advance, and proceeded to fell trees across the road, at the portages, and on all the narrow creeks by which they were to pass. They soon accomplished such a complete obstruction, that Mr. Delorme with his small party, found it impossible to open a passage for his loaded canoes. His adventure being thus entirely frustrated, he left his goods and made his retreat with his men only. On his arrival at Fort William, the trading post of the North-West Company, he found Mr. M’Gillivray, by whose direction these obstructions had been made. To him Delorme presented the keys of the packages which he had left, and remonstrated on the unjustifiable manner in which he had been treated; but his appeal was fruitless. Finding that no redress could otherwise be obtained, Mr. Rousseau brought an action for damages against the Company; but the case did not come to a

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trial, a compromise having been offered and accepted. The North-West Company agreed to pay for the goods which Delorme had left beyond the Grand Portage, at the invoice price as valued at Montreal. By this, Mr. Rousseau lost all the wages of the men, and other expenses he had occurred in the outfit, but he thought it advisable to accept the compensation, however inadequate, rather than trust to the chance of obtaining justice in the courts of law.”—*A Sketch of the British Fur Trade, 1816*, pp.56-61.

That splendid “North West spirit” to which the Company owed much of its success was darkened by the ruthlessness which the partners, Duncan M’Gillivray not excepted, showed to all who crossed or threatened to cross their path.

It seems probable that M’Gillivray’s mind, during the last months of his life, was centred upon the problems which faced the North West Company when it crossed the Rockies in 1807 to make establishments for trade in the valley of the Columbia. There is in the Public Archives of Canada a photostat copy of a manuscript in the Royal Colonial Institute, London, where also lies the original of Duncan M’Gillivray’s *Journal*. It is in the same hand as the *Journal*, probably that of M’Gillivray himself. Its superscription is *Some Account of the Trade carried on by the North West Company*. It has been annotated by the hand of William M’Gillivray who has written in the margins headings for the paragraphs, added facts on the blank pages opposite and has put in a new title, *Sketch of the Fur Trade, 1809*. The *Account* tells of the early fur-trade, of the formation of the North West Company in 1784, of the reduction of the consumption of spirituous liquors by the Indians due to the Company’s elimination of the evils of an unrestrained

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competition, of the value of its trade in promoting British manufactures, and finally, of the great benefit to the British Empire of a company of traders which keeps the Indians loyal to the flag. It includes a statement of the returns of the trade from 1784-1807, *i.e.*, to the year preceding Duncan's death. It also gives the numbers of the North West Company's posts in the different regions, attributing three posts to the west of the Rocky Mountains. It shows that it will not pay to bring the furs all the way across the continent to Montreal and envisages the formation of a "general establishment" on the Columbia near the sea. This manuscript was used by the anonymous author of the pamphlet, *On the Origin and Progress of the North West Company*, London, 1811, for William M'Gillivray's headings are preserved and whole sentences and paragraphs are printed almost verbatim the same. John Henry, who was in the height of favour with the fur merchants of Montreal at this time, may have been the author of the pamphlet and may have taken both the *Journal* and *Account* with him over to London when he crossed the sea. As to the *Account*, the fact that it speaks of three posts as built beyond the Rockies would suggest that it could not have been written by Duncan M'Gillivray, for, at his death in April, 1808, David Thompson could not have yet informed Montreal of his establishing the first transmontane post, that at the lower Columbian Lake. But in 1809, when Wm. M'Gillivray added the new title, they could have had word only of the building of that single post. The three posts, then, must have been no more than planned and are mentioned in the *Account*, which was written as propaganda, in anticipation of an expansion the main outlines of which were already sketched. So too with

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the statement: "The trade as carried on at present beyond the mountains . . . is a very considerable loss to the Company; as the furs will not pay for the transport to Montreal." The inference that Duncan M'Gillivray is the author of the manuscript is borne out to some extent by the fact that the returns of the trade given conclude with 1807, M'Gillivray's last year as agent. The *Account* ends:

Not satisfied with the immense region on the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains throughout which their trade is established, they [the North West Company] have commenced a project for extending their researches and trade as far as the South Sea; and have already introduced British manufactured goods, among the nations on the Western side of the Rocky mountains; intending to form a general establishment for the trade of that country on the Columbia river, which as has already been observed, receives and conducts to the ocean all the waters that rise West of the mountains. The trade as it is carried on at present beyond the mountains, instead of yielding any profit, is a very considerable loss to the Company; as the furs will not pay for the transport to Montreal, where they are shipped; nor can any establishment be formed immediately on the side of the Western Ocean; as the natives in consequence of some very ill-treatment by some American adventurers trading on the coast about 10 years ago, are extremely hostile to the whites, but this prejudice will yield to the superior conveniences of a hatchet and a gun, over sharp stone and a bow and arrow (with which the Indians will become gradually acquainted) and to the kindness and fair dealing of those who intend to make permanent establishments among them. Should the Company succeed in this project a new field

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will be opened for the consumption of British manufactured goods; and a vast country and population made dependent on the British Empire. It is conceived however that all this cannot be accomplished without the aid of the British Government; which will scarce be withheld from an effort of such commercial and political consequence.

This vague plea for help from the Government appears in *On the Origin and Progress* as a definite request for a charter.

Had Duncan M'Gillivray, as agent of the Company, lived to carry out the policy with which he had so much to do at its commencement and with which he was pre-occupied in the last months of his life, he would not now be forgotten. Rather, his name would be mentioned in the History of the North West Company in the same breath as that of their great protagonist, his brother William.

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